THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE BODY AND THE SOUL AS A METAPHOR OF THE MORAL STRUGGLE IN THE MIDDLE AGES, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MIDDLE ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

JOHN ALLEN CANUTESON

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE COUNCIL OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

1975

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to many good friends who have helped during the research and writing of this study. To Dr. Richard Green, Chairman of my Supervisory Committee, and to Dr. Robert H. Bowers go my warm thanks for criticism and guidance. To Dr. Dean Dunham and Dean Bruce R. Thompson of William Jewell College go my thanks for patience, small classes, and immunity from committee assignments, and to Associate Dean Gordon Kingsley my appreciation for a winter term in which to work exclusively on the dissertation. The staffs of the University of Florida Library and William Jewell College Library have been diligent in finding and borrowing material from other libraries, and the University of Texas Library at Austin has been a friendly haven during holidays and vacations. Thanks also go to Miss Susan Goodwin for typing countless notecards and to Mrs. Julia Merrill for typing the final draft. My greatest debts are owed to my greatest loves--my wife and two sons.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate Council
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE BODY AND THE SOUL AS A METAPHOR
OF THE MORAL STRUGGLE IN THE MIDDLE AGES, WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO MIDDLE ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

John Allen Canuteson

December, 1975

Chairman: Richard H. Green
Major Department: English

This study is an examination of a popular way writers of the Middle Ages understood and presented the matter of moral choice. It is an analysis of the habit of medieval authors and preachers of reducing the moral struggle to a conflict between the body and the soul, the development of a series of traditional images of the conflict, and the presence of these images in an important nonreligious poem of the late Middle Ages.

In the first chapter I show the epistemological and scriptural origins of the body-soul model for the moral struggle and the presence of the body-soul conflict in the writings of influential men of the Middle Ages. Because this conflict is a spiritual struggle represented analogically and therefore requires interpretation, I also examine modern discussions about the presence of religious meanings in secular texts and determine that the best tests for meanings which extend beyond

the narrative level are contextual probability and tradition.

The second chapter is a survey of the most popular images used by the Latin writers of the earlier Middle Ages to represent the internal struggle between the body and the soul. These images are light-dark, fire, water, earth, burden, ascent, sailor-ship, husk-kernel, thorn, swine, horse-rider, inner-outer man; dwelling place with openings, vessel, ladder, knife, musical instrument, tomb, clothing, husband-wife and lover; judge, prison, slavery, kingdom, king-subject, rebellion, and war.

The third chapter demonstrates the continuity and pervasiveness of this traditional imagery in Middle English writings of the late Middle Ages. While new images of canine animals, a game of chess, and the foul fruits of the body appeared, and while the images of slavery, the judge, and the tomb receded, the images remained in use of light-dark, fire, earth, water, ascent, burden, sailor-ship, chaff, thorn, swine, horse-rider, inner-outer man, castle, vessel, prison, kingdom, king-subject, lord-servant, rebellion, and war. The images of the body-soul conflict can be seen in the early thirteenth-century poem, the Debate Between the Body and the Soul, where images of light-dark, fire, earth, burden, water, thorn, husband-wife and adultery, judge, prison, master-servant, rebellion, and fighting add resonance to the central conflict of the poem.

In the fourth chapter I examine a late fourteenth-century poem, the stanzaic Morte Arthur, which is not overtly religious in subject matter and, unlike the Debate, would seem to have little need for the images of the body-soul struggle. What we discover, however, is that

the poet is interested in two types of drama: the suspense of the action surrounding the fall of Arthur's kingdom and the drama of man's moral condition reflected in that action. The poet draws our attention to the second kind of drama with images of light-dark, fire, earth, burden, water, ship, thorn, swine, horse-rider, castle, tomb, musical instrument, clothing, husband-wife-lover, judge, prison, kingdom, king-subject, lord-servant, rebellion, and war.

CHAPTER I

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE BODY AND THE SOUL IN MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

In any age the ways in which men reflect on their condition are diverse and would seem to defy systematic discussion. When we turn to the Middle Ages, a period of a good thousand years, the prospects for finding definitive traits for the age are dim. Joseph Mazzeo has pointed out, for example, that no one now seriously regards the Middle Ages as homogenous, because it was too complex to be approached by way of broad generalization:

> No medievalist any longer believes, without some qualification, that the Middle Ages was a period of cultural unity. We know too much about medieval skeptics, rationalists, mystics, and heretics not to be fully aware of the great conflicts which arose within the unity of medieval culture.[1]

Nevertheless, Mazzeo asserts, "There was a profound unity which overlaid most of the differences, wide as they were"; and he goes on to say that certain ideas, such as the metaphysics of light and the concept of hierarchy, are helpful for understanding Dante's Comedy.

While recognizing the dangers in a schematic approach to a past period, Mazzeo analyzes a few patterns of medieval thought because they will lead the reader beyond topical allusions and biography to a richer appreciation of the Comedy. The approach allows Mazzeo to distinguish a pattern of hierarchy and light imagery in the poem:

> From the beginning of the Divine Comedy--"where the sun is silent"--to the final vision of light, the poem is a carefully ordered hierarchy of lights and shadows. Not only are we asked to see clearly, we are asked to see qualitatively, to

> distinguish degrees of light and kinds of vision. It is in the last canto of the Paradiso that the degree of light is most intense and that our attention is called to a unique kind of seeing. . . . With mounting intensity we are brought face to face with that light which is God, the supreme, pure, true, and eternal light. We see Him both as luce, the source of light, and as lume, His reflected splendor in the universe of thought, the radiance which beautifies the angels and the blessed. We see Him as the simple light, the unity wherein Dante saw the reduction of all the multiplicity of the universe, substance and accidents, the scattered pages of the universe bound together.[2]

Only by assuming a general understanding of light metaphysics and hierarchy in Dante and his medieval readers can one explain this part of Dante's artistry. And, conversely, the presence of these patterns in the Comedy argues that Mazzeo is dealing with genuine medieval ideas.

I would similarly draw attention to the fragility of conclusions reached by research in the history of men's thoughts. We are hundreds of years removed from the late fourteenth-century poet who wrote the stanzaic Morte Arthur, a poem I will examine later, and statements about the intentions of the author are almost certain to contain errors. Any single work of art is the result of countless decisions on the part of the artist, who in turn is molded by complex cultural influences. Our late fourteenth-century English poet, for example, was probably an Englishman; he was no doubt aware of the continuing war in France; he was certainly a Christian, but he may have been faithful or slothful in attendance at church; he may or may not have visited countries on the continent--the list of formative influences on his ideas and art could go on indefinitely. We are even further removed from St. Paul, and central problems in the thought of this very influential figure are still being debated.[3] One would almost despair of saying anything certain about the artistry and thought of past writers.

But if remoteness breeds difficulty, it also breeds fascination. We are lured by the possibility of reconstructing at least minor parts of the influences on the artists of the past in efforts to understand their work. In order to find these influences we are forced to fragment and anatomize the past, to dissect it and examine it to locate the systems, the patterns of thought, which the age may not have known that it had, or which it only partially understood. When we have discovered these patterns, we begin to see possible influences on individual figures. Or, to put it another way, we see in a general way how literary works fit in a historical and cultural context. In fact, as we will presently see, both Paul and the author of the stanzaic Morte Arthur participated in a tradition which is not only real and demonstrable but also a centrally important way in which men of the Middle Ages saw themselves and expressed the nature of their struggle to achieve perfection.

The passages from the Bible to which preachers and writers returned again and again in the Middle Ages to abbreviate, clarify, and dramatize the moral struggle were Romans 7, 21-25[4]:

> I find then a law, that when I have a will to do good, evil is present with me. For I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man: But I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, I myself, with the mind serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin.

and Galatians 5, 16-17:

> I say then, walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit: and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to another: so that you do not the things that you would.[5]

This study is devoted to the habit of medieval thinkers and writers of

making vivid man's moral condition by reducing the moral struggle to an essentially antithetical relationship between the body and the soul, a reduction usually accomplished through one or more of a series of conventional images. My thesis is that the body-soul abbreviation and the images attendant to it were common and important enough to constitute a major way medieval men had of understanding the crucial subject of their moral welfare and the eternal consequences of their actions. Men then as now were intrigued by the suspense of human destiny, and the writers of the Middle Ages frequently cast their thoughts in the shape of the body-soul conflict and the traditional images of it.[6]

In the first of four chapters I examine two factors which contributed to the metaphor of the body-soul conflict--the dominant medieval epistemology, in which data provided by the senses was subordinate to the truth within man's soul, and the biblical use of flesh, which frequently represented man apart from God. I show that influential church figures of the Middle Ages used the body-soul conflict as an effective way to simplify and dramatize the moral condition. Since there has been much debate concerning the presence of religious meanings in secular texts, I also review the arguments about an exegetical approach to medieval literature and conclude that contextual probability and tradition are the best criteria for establishing levels of meaning beyond the narrative level.

The second chapter presents some of the principal images of the body-soul struggle as they appeared in Latin literature, to illustrate that a tradition of images was linked to the flesh-spirit discussions. The third chapter demonstrates that the body-soul images continued in

the later Middle Ages, though they were altered in Middle English religious literature, and that a reading of the Debate Between the Body and the Soul is enriched by an awareness of the body-soul images. In the final chapter I turn to a literary work, the stanzaic Morte Arthur, which has been slighted by scholars who have overlooked its craftsmanship and, more significantly, the traditional morality on which it is founded. The poem reveals most of the images of the body-soul conflict, suggesting that while the poet presents a lively narrative of a legendary hero-king, he also views the happenings he describes with an awareness of the moral drama at work and illustrates that drama with the traditional images of conflict between the demands of body and soul.

Two factors contributed to the use of the conflict between the body and the soul as a dramatic simplification of the moral struggle in the Middle Ages. The first was an epistemology inherited from Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophers and modified by Christian thinkers, in which sense data and the knowledge it provided were secondary in importance and validity to the knowledge of truth within and threatening to the welfare of the soul.[7] The second was the biblical use of flesh to represent man apart from God. I will briefly examine some epistemological statements of Augustine and Boethius, because these writers were important to later medieval thinkers,[8] and Hugh of St. Victor, because he illustrates the continuation of the epistemology in the later Middle Ages.

The body was generally thought in the Middle Ages worthy only of providing the soul with sense data about the physical world. While

the senses provided necessary information about the world, they gave man little help as he searched for eternal, intelligible truth. The opinion that the soul illumined by God is the source of truth and that the body is only a courier of information about a transient and insignificant world is heard throughout the Middle Ages. In On the Immortality of the Soul, Augustine analyzes the relative importance of the soul and the body in the process of acquiring knowledge and bluntly denies that the body helps:

> Now, truly, when we reason, it is the mind which reasons. For only he who thinks reasons. Neither does the body think, nor does the mind receive the help of the body in thinking, since when the mind wishes to think it turns away from the body. For what is thought is thus eternal, and nothing pertaining to the body is thus eternal. Therefore the body cannot help the mind as it strives to understand; for it is sufficient if the body does not hamper the mind.[9]

The body is at best no help, at worst a hindrance to eternal knowledge.

Augustine distinguishes between scientia and sapientia, between knowledge acquired in the world from the senses, and wisdom, the apprehension of God in the soul. The beasts and birds have sense knowledge, including memory ("else they could never find their lairs and nests again"[10]); but Augustine believes man rises above the level of the beasts when he rises above mere cogitation, the collecting and arranging of sense images.[11] In the Confessions Augustine remembers how he was misled by the interest of the Manichaeans in worldly, scientific knowledge:

> And these were the dishes in which to me, hungering for Thee, they, instead of Thee, served up the sun and moon, Thy beauteous works--but yet Thy works, not Thyself, nay, nor Thy first works. For before these corporeal works are Thy spiritual ones, celestial and shining though they be.[12]

Sense data can point to God: "We are not God, but He made us."[13]

Otherwise, knowledge of the world is in no way to be compared to the contemplation of spiritual truths. Augustine is remorseful that he "sought after Thee not according to the understanding of the mind, in which Thou desiredst that I should excel the beasts, but according to the sense of the flesh."

In the Contra Academicos Augustine discusses how difficult it would be to contemplate the intelligible world if souls had to rely on this sense data:

> Human reason would never lead such souls to the intelligible world if the most high God had not vouchsafed--through clemency toward the whole human race--to send the authority of the divine intellect down even to a human body, and caused it to dwell therein, so that souls would be aroused not only by divine precepts but also by divine acts, and would be thus enabled to reflect on themselves and to gaze upon their fatherland.[14]

As to what is the subject of contemplation which constitutes sapientia, Augustine explains in the De Beata Vita that Wisdom, Truth, and the Second Person of the Trinity are all one:

> But what wisdom should be so called, if not the wisdom of God? We have also heard through divine authority that the Son of God is nothing but the wisdom of God, and that the Son of God is truly God. Thus, everyone having God is happy. . . . But, do you believe wisdom is different from truth? For it has also been said, "I am the Truth."[15]

The answer is that the possession of one is the possession of all three--Truth, the Son, and Wisdom--as well as happiness.

Perhaps the most famous and influential statement of the Middle Ages on the primacy of internal truth and the unreliability of sense data is in Boethius' Consoliation of Philosophy. In her well-known argument consoling the narrator, who has been lamenting the passing of his worldly happiness, Lady Philosophy contends that the narrator

has made a mistake in considering the objects of sense as important. He has forgotten his real identity and has looked outside himself for happiness:

> What an upside-down state of affairs when a man who is divine by his gift of reason thinks his excellence depends on the possession of lifeless bric-a-brac.[16]

After stressing the weakness and transience of the body, Lady Philosophy says to the narrator that when one remembers his divine nature, he will look within himself to find happiness:

> Then all that was hidden by the dark cloud of error will shine more clearly than Phoebus; for the body, with its burden of forgetfulness, cannot drive all light from his mind. (Book 3, Poem 11)

The effect of the search within for truth is much the same as Augustine's understanding of the soul illumined by God:

> The seed of truth grows deep within and is roused to life by the breath of learning. For how can you answer questions truly unless the spark of truth glows deep in your heart? (Book 3, Poem 11)

When the soul seeks within itself and contemplates the divine mind, it becomes free, as Boethius distinguishes different levels of freedom and bondage. Souls are the freest when they are contemplating the divine mind, a little less free when they are joined to bodies, and still less free when they are bound by earthly fetters (Book 5, Prose 2). The most abject slavery occurs when the souls lose their reason and submit to vice:

> For when they turn away their eyes from the light of a supreme truth to mean and dark things, they are blinded by a cloud of ignorance and obsessed by vicious passions. (Book 5, Prose 2)

The soul loses its wisdom and freedom as it associates itself with data provided by the body.

To underscore the primacy of intelligible truths over knowledge provided by the senses, Boethius suggests a discussion between reason on the one hand and the senses and imagination on the other about their relative merits (Book 5, Prose 5). Suppose, says Boethius, that the senses and imagination were to argue that the universal, the unique contribution of reason, did not exist. Their claim would be that only sense objects exist, that universals are meaningless. Reason would answer that it judges the sense impressions "under the aspect of universality," and that the senses "cannot go beyond corporeal figures." The question for Boethius is easily solved--reason is right and the senses and imagination are wrong. We should agree with reason because "in matters of knowledge we ought to trust the stronger and more perfect judgment."

In Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy there is a contrast between the beauty of the inner truth and the excellence of the search for it and the realization of man's divinity on the one hand, and the weakness and transience of the body and the unreliability of the senses and imagination on the other. Just as the body is incapable of providing lasting happiness, it is also incapable of giving sound knowledge. The continuity in the tradition of contempt for the senses between the early fifth century, the early sixth century, and the early twelfth century can be seen by looking at the work of Hugh of Saint Victor, who was called, in fact, "a second Augustine."[17] Hugh shares Augustine's distinction between wisdom and understanding (intelligentia) and empirical knowledge (scientia). He defines philosophy as "the discipline which investigates comprehensively the ideas of all things,

human and divine,"[18] and maintains that in pursuing the branches of philosophy man restores the divine image in himself. While Hugh is open to the theoretical consideration of earthly facts, he nevertheless points out the deterioration of the unity of the soul caused by too much involvement with sense data. The soul, by descending to the bodily senses, forgets its nature; and it regains the image of God only through instruction.

In the Didascalicon Hugh argues that man's erect posture symbolizes that man, unlike the beasts who are able only to look at the earth, can contemplate wisdom. When man fails to realize his higher nature, he degenerates to the level of the beast; in fact, until man recognized this wisdom and was illuminated by it, he was no better than the beasts. Now that he realizes his character, he should not turn to sense knowledge:

> . . . man was like all the other animals when he did not understand that he had been created by a higher order than they. But his immortal mind, illuminated by Wisdom, beholds its own principle, and recognizes how unfitting it is for it to seek anything outside itself when what is in itself can be enough for it. (p. 46)

Hugh notes the inscription on the tripod of Apollo, "Know thyself," and argues that anyone who knows his own nature would not submit to anything changeable--he would "recognize that everything subject to change is nothing."

The inability to remember the dignity of one's nature results from sense impressions:

> For the mind, stupefied by bodily sensations and enticed out of itself by sensuous forms, has forgotten what it was, and because it does not remember that it was anything different, believes that it is nothing except what is seen. (p. 47)

Sense experience has little importance except to relay knowledge about the world to the soul. Hugh defines understanding as the "pure and certain knowledge of the sole principles of things--namely of God, of ideas, and of prime matter, and of incorporeal substances" (p. 66). Imagination on the other hand is "sensuous memory made up of traces of corporeal objects inhering in the world; it possesses in itself nothing certain as a source of knowledge" (p. 67). The soul descends to the level of sense perception in order to interpret what is being perceived in the senses, but the apprehensive process is in the soul.

When the soul descends to sense perception, it is in effect sullying itself by becoming less like the angels:

> For the nature of spirits and souls, because it is incorporeal, simple, participates in intellectible [_i.e._, not perceived by the senses] substance; but because through the sense organs spirit or soul descends in different ways to the apprehension of physical objects and draws into itself a likeness of them through its imagination, it deserts its simplicity somehow by admitting a type of composition. (p. 63)

The intelligible substance in man includes, in addition to the intellect, the imagination, by which it perceives sense objects. But in the process of imagining, in the contact with the senses, the soul degenerates by losing its simplicity and unity. It "rushes out" to contact physical objects and in the process it is "cut away from its simplicity each time it is penetrated by any qualities entering through hostile sense experience" (p. 64). The opposite process, reintegration, takes place when the soul moves from objects of the sense to understanding:

> But when, mounting from such distraction toward pure understanding, it gathers itself into one, it becomes more blessed through participating in intellectible substance.

Hugh studies the going out and return of the soul in a numerological

analysis in which the numbers 1, 3, 9, 27, and 81 represent activities of the soul. The soul is first a simple essence and proceeds to threeness in the concupiscible and irascible passions, which are presided over by reason. Nine symbolizes the control exercised over the human body, since there are nine openings in the body. There is a kind of calm that still reigns, however, as the soul controls the music of the body. Hugh says that the music between the soul and the body consists "in loving one's flesh, but one's spirit more; in cherishing one's body, but not in destroying one's virtue" (p. 69).

The third step is the most damaging to the unity of the soul:

> In a third progression, the soul, having poured itself out through the senses upon all visible things--which demand its supervision and which are symbolized by "twenty-seven," a cube number, extended tri-dimensionally after the manner of the body--is dissipated in countless actions.

The simplicity of the soul is lost by the soul's involvement in life. Hugh regards the reestablishment of the unity of the soul as possible only at life's end, symbolized by 81, where 80 represents the end of one's life and one is the simple essence again:

> [It is] glowingly evident that the soul, after this life's end, designated by the "eighty," returns to the unity of its simple state, from which it had previously departed when it descended to rule a human body. (p. 65)

As <u>one</u> is suitable for the soul, <u>two</u> and <u>four</u> represent the body, because "everything which is composed of divisibles or solubles is itself also divisible or dissoluble."

Rehabilitation for the soul, which has been "enticed out of itself by sensuous forms" and which "does not remember that it was anything different" (p. 45), is through instruction, so that it learns what its nature is and that it does not need to seek without what it

can find within, which is wisdom. The wisdom referred to is, as Augustine had said, the Wisdom of God, and the rational creature becomes wise by participating in that Wisdom. The benefits bestowed by Wisdom are "truth of speculation and of thought and holy and pure chastity of action" (p. 48), or correct thinking and virtuous behavior. The influence of Wisdom, of Christ, is both moral rectitude and intellectual acuteness.

The brute animal does not have reason, but is guided only by sense impressions, "driven by a certain blind inclination of the flesh" (p. 51). The rational soul, on the other hand, is not so swept away, but uses wisdom to moderate its actions. To be human is to be able to think about things above the level of sense impressions. The double nature of man is reflected in the functions of his mental activity, "either to restore in us the likeness of the divine image, or to take thought for the necessity of this life" (p. 54). The image of God is restored through "the contemplation of truth and the practice of virtue" (intelligentia); and knowledge based on the senses (scientia) is mechanical or logical: "The latter, since it derives from below and requires, as it were, a certain practical counsel, [we may call] 'knowledge.'" One who studied the philosophy of, say, armament and hunting would thus be relying on knowledge of the senses to provide for the necessities of life. One who studied the philosophy of mathematics or private morality would be looking to his inner wisdom.

We have thus seen in Augustine, Boethius, and Hugh of St. Victor a clear division between knowledge based on the senses of the body and on principles of truth within man's soul, with all three agreeing that

the source of truth is within the soul and that the senses can only provide knowledge of a transient world. Augustine said that true wisdom comes not from the senses but from within, Boethius shows that happiness cannot be found through the senses, and Hugh of St. Victor shows the deterioration of the unity and simplicity of the soul resulting from the soul's involvement with the senses of the body. But for thinkers in the Middle Ages, the senses were also the messengers of temptation through the information about the world which they brought to the soul. We saw in the Consolation that the soul, in becoming involved with the bodily senses, became ensnared in viciousness. Likewise, to other writers in the Middle Ages, the data provided by the senses could be simply necessary to get along in the world; but they also could lead to an excessive preoccupation with the world and a turning away from the Truth, the presence of Christ within. We can see in this threatening nature of the senses the stage being set for the body-soul conflict as a metaphor of the moral struggle.

In the Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, Augustine sees the turning to the senses as an integral part of the commission of sin. The senses give the first step, suggestion, "either through the memory or through the bodily senses--when we are seeing or hearing or smelling or tasting or touching something."[19] If pleasure follows, it must be repressed or sin results. If consent is given to the pleasure, sin is committed.

The three steps in the process of sin consist of the intrusion into the soul of sense data from the flesh:

> These three successive stages are such as if the suggestion were made by the serpent, that is to say, it is made by a

> slimy and sinuous motion, namely, a transient action of the body. For, if any such images hover within the soul, they have been drawn from without, that is, from the body. (p. 53)

Moreover, the process of committing the sin is analogous to the steps of the Fall, with Adam representing the soul, Eve the movement of the soul to the body, to sensuality, and the serpent representing the suggestion made to the senses:

> For the suggestion, as well as a kind of persuasion, is made as though by a serpent; the pleasure is in the carnal desire, as though in Eve; and the consent is in the reason, as though in the man. (p. 53)

The result of the process in every man is sin, as it is seen figuratively in the Garden of Eden.

In the Confessions, Augustine likewise blames the movement of the soul to the senses for two of the errors which he now bitterly laments. He was interested in scientific knowledge; and he took first one, then a second, mistress:

> My soul was far from well, and, full of ulcers, it miserably cast itself forth, craving to be excited by contact with objects of sense. Yet, had these no soul, they would not surely inspire love. To love and to be loved was sweet to me, and all the more when I succeeded in enjoying the person I loved.[20]

Later in the Confessions Augustine discusses to what extent each of the senses offers temptations to him.[21] He finds the pleasures of eating and drinking--the pleasures of the sense of taste--very appealing. The necessity to eat and drink in this life will be replaced "with an amazing satiety" in the next life, but in the meantime this sense is tempting:

> But now is necessity sweet to me, and against this sweetness I fight lest I be enthralled; and I carry on a daily war by fastings, oftentimes bringing my body into subjection; and my pains are expelled by pleasure.

One problem posed by the senses, such as hearing, is that they are distracting. Augustine, listening to music in a service, begins to think about the beauty of the music related by the bodily senses and to forget God:

> But the gratification of my flesh, to which the mind ought never to be given over to be enervated, often beguiles me, while the sense does not so attend on reason as to follow her patiently; but having gained admission merely for her sake, it strives ever to run on before her, and be her leader.[22]

The desire to gratify the senses and to enjoy the impressions they receive is the lust of the flesh, but Augustine also shows how the lust of the eyes, or curiosity, is dependent on the senses:

> For besides that concupiscence of the flesh which lies in the gratification of all senses and pleasures, wherein its slaves who are far from Thee perish, there pertains to the soul, through the same senses of the body, a certain vain and curious longing, cloaked under the name of knowledge and learning, not of having pleasure in the flesh, but of making experiments through the flesh. This longing, since it originates in an appetite for knowledge, and the sight being the chief amongst the senses in the acquisition of knowledge, is called in divine language the lust of the eyes.[23]

The senses are thus worse than distracting: they aid and abet two members of the famous triad of evil.[24]

Among medieval writers, not only was the soul preferred to the body as a source of knowledge, but the body's function in the acquisition of earthly knowledge also figured in the discussion of the nature of sin. The body was not a conveyer of true wisdom, and the data it provided posed a threat to the well-being of the soul. But while epistemology had a significance in the discussion of the nature and process of sin, it would be a mistake to believe that orthodox Christian writers attributed the power to originate evil to the human body. They emphatically did not.

Augustine sets himself apart from Virgil whom he sees expressing a Platonist's view of the superiority of the soul to the body in the <u>Aeneid</u>:

> A fiery strength inspires their lives,
> An essence that from heaven derives,
> Though clogged in part by limbs of clay
> And the dull vesture of decay.[25]

Augustine objects when Virgil goes on to suggest that the body is the source of the passions and of evil:

> Hence wild desires and grovelling fears,
> And human laughter, human tears,
> Immured in dungeon-seeming night,
> They look abroad, yet see no light.

Augustine protests that "we believe quite otherwise." With regard to the first sin, "It was not the corruptible flesh that made the soul sinful, but the sinful soul that made the flesh corruptible." Sin arises in the soul, rather than in the body: the body can only be the vehicle for suggestion.

Augustine underscores the difference between his thinking and that of the Platonists and Manicheans.[26] The Platonists do not believe, with the Manicheans, that men's bodies are evil, but they do believe that the infected body is the source of the passions which lead to vice in life:

> From the death-infected members and earthly construction of the body they believe the soul is so affected, that there are thus originated in it the diseases of desires, and fears, and joy, and sorrow, under which perturbations . . . is included the whole viciousness of human life.[27]

Virgil himself does not believe this error, Augustine smiles, because he shows a disembodied soul in Hades expressing emotion.[28] Therefore, the Platonists and their philosophical allies themselves must believe

that the soul can be "agitated with these emotions at its own instance."

The Christian writers of the Middle Ages frequently revealed that they knew they were speaking metaphorically when they discussed man's carnality. In the City of God Augustine, for example, outlines the distinction between the two cities and the two loves that they represent--"what it is to live after the flesh, and what to live after the spirit."[29] He says that anyone who looks at Scripture carefully would not conclude that the Epicureans are the only ones who live after the flesh or that the Stoics live by the spirit or mind, because in the Bible flesh can refer to the whole man. When Paul in Galatians includes in the category of carnal sins not only those which are genuinely of the flesh but also those which are not,[30] he is using "that mode of speech," in which a part stands for the whole.[31] Augustine later says that when he himself populates the two cities with those who live according to the flesh and those who live after the spirit, he could just as well have said of men that "some live according to man, others according to God.[32] He quotes I Corinthians 3, 3: "For whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal, and walk according to man," and concludes that "to walk according to man and to be carnal are the same."

Similarly Ambrose realized that fleshliness was used in the Bible to suggest sin. When soul is used in the Old Testament, "the Hebrew who cleaves to God" is meant, while the term flesh is used to refer to sinners.[33] He gives as New Testament examples Romans 7, 14-15, and 7, 23-24: When Paul saw the war raging within him and cried, "Unhappy man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" he was using the body as the sinful impulse.

What Augustine and Ambrose found about the scriptural use of <u>flesh</u> is important for the body-soul abbreviation in the Middle Ages. In the Old Testament, <u>basar</u> is the term for the flesh which is common to men and animals. The term is used of men in Genesis 2, 21: "Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam: and when he was fast asleep, he took one of his ribs, and filled up flesh for it," and of animals in Genesis 9, 4 and Leviticus 4, 11.[34] The use of flesh applies to the whole man in Genesis 6, 17: "Behold I will bring the waters of a great flood upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life under heaven," and in Genesis 2, 24, among other places.[35] Flesh in the Old Testament also suggests the weakness of man, as in Psalm 77, 39: "And he remembered that they are flesh: a wind that goeth and returneth not."[36]

J. A. T. Robinson has analyzed Paul's use of <u>flesh</u> and his relationship to the Hebraic tradition, and he finds Paul using <u>flesh</u> as man "in his distance and difference from God."[37] Paul, like the Old Testament writers, uses <u>flesh</u> to represent the whole man:

> [<u>Sarx</u>] does not mean one part of a man, but the whole man seen under the aspect of the flesh. Hence it frequently stands, as in the Old Testament, simply for "man." "I conferred not with flesh and blood" (Galatians 1, 16) means "with no other human beings." "No flesh," in the regular Old Testament phrase, means "nobody," (Romans 3, 20; Galatians 2, 16; I Corinthians 1, 29).[38]

And Paul, like Old Testament writers, uses flesh to label man's mortality and insufficiency:

> Man as <u>basar</u>, though defined essentially in his relation to God, "the God of all flesh" (Jeremiah 32, 27), is yet man in his distance and difference from God. For while God is Spirit, He is not flesh: "Hast thou eyes of flesh? or seest thou as man seeth?" (Job 10, 4); "The Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit" (Isaiah 31, 3)

> Flesh represents mere man, man in contrast with God--hence man in his weakness and mortality.[39]

Robinson's analysis reveals that the opposition of the lives of the flesh and the spirit in Galatians 5, 17-25 is not a Greek opposition of reason and the passions, but a distinction between living according to man and according to God. When Paul uses flesh to represent man, he generally sees man in his effort to trust in himself rather than in God:

> Thus, when Paul asks the Galatians, "Having begun in the Spirit are ye now perfected in the flesh?" he refers, not to a lapse into sensuality, but to a return to reliance upon the law.[40]

The flesh serves the "'letter' (Romans 7, 6; 2, 28ff.), which is 'of men' (Romans 2, 29) and represents human self-sufficiency (2 Corinthians 3, 5ff.)."[41]

The semantic tradition of flesh within which Paul wrote will be helpful as we turn to the medieval habit of reducing the moral struggle to a conflict between the flesh and the spirit, particularly with Ambrose's insight that flesh is used in the Bible to refer to sinners. I will concentrate on three writers--Ambrose, Augustine, and Bonaventure--to show that they continue the tradition of using carnality to refer to man apart from God and the sinful impulse. I will begin with the first book of Ambrose's Jacob and the Happy Life because it illustrates the compatibility of a more technical and careful explanation of the process of sin with the body-soul simplification invoked for clarity and efficiency.

F. Homes Dudden has written that Ambrose's desire for the renunciation of the world by man is articulated in terms of the rejection of

the flesh: "Such renunciation should be practiced, first, in respect of the flesh, and secondly, in respect of all that pertains to the flesh."[42] Dudden finds that in Ambrose's thought the flesh should be renounced because it is not only "abject and vile" but also because it is "the 'enemy' of the soul, and persistently seeks to carry it into sinful captivity." Dudden's analysis hardly seems to apply when we first look at the Jacob, where Ambrose, discussing the control of the passions by reason as a way to happiness, is careful to explain that man's free will chooses either good or evil:

> For man is not bound to obedience out of servile necessity, but by free will we either incline to virtue or lean to vice. And thus either our affections, which are free, draw us into error, or our will, following upon reason, calls us away.[43]

The strongest passion is concupiscence, which reason can restrain, as in the case of an irascible man who is able to soften his anger. The passions can be classed simply under pleasure, joy, fear, and sadness; or as passions of the soul (pride, avarice, ambition, strife, and envy) and body (gluttony and "the outpouring of excessive and wanton living"). Aside from the luxuria assigned to the body, however, Ambrose does not attribute the origin of sin to the flesh. On the contrary he points out that we should not blame the flesh, because our body can serve either right or wrong: "And so the passions are the author of guilt, and not the flesh, for the flesh is the servant of the will" (p. 126).

But within a few paragraphs, Ambrose reverts for rhetorical effect to the conflict between the flesh and the spirit. He first quotes and then paraphrases Paul's explanation of his moral struggle.[44] Ambrose is talking about the law of Christ, which he, as a Christian,

admires in the abstract but has difficulty following:

> I see its grace, I praise its beauty, I proclaim its wording, I admire its teaching; but because "I am carnal, and sold under sin," I am drawn into guilt against my will. Sin indeed dominates, as if over a slave. Accordingly, I hate sin--and I commit it. The mind hates it, the flesh desires it, but I am in both; with my mind I consent to the law and with my flesh I do that which I do not want. The commandment to which I consent is good, and the mind which chooses what is good, is good--good for judging, but often weak for making resistance, because the body's desire opposes it and leads it captive to the enticements of error. (pp. 129-30)

It is much simpler to use a dual metaphor, with its conflict, to dramatize the moral struggle. Ambrose essentially repeats what he had said earlier about the conflict between reason and the passions, but he recasts the discussion in the context of a conflict between reason and wisdom and the flesh:

> And so, to return to the beginning of this discourse, that mind is good which has the control of the reason and is directed toward the teachings of wisdom; but it endures a grievous strife with the body of death, and often the enticement, which is of the flesh, conquers the reason, which is of the mind.

Ambrose alludes to Romans 8, 7, to show that the flesh was not completely controlled by reason: "But the flesh was not subdued, because the wisdom of the flesh was not subject to the law and opposed its teachings" (p. 131). The "wisdom of the flesh" suggests not just the physical desires of the flesh, but a whole way of life conducted without reference to God. This life, the way of the flesh, is without virtue, "For the flesh would not have been obedient to virtue, since it had been given over to its own desires and enveloped in its own panderings."

The only way that reason can triumph over the flesh is by the help of grace, and Ambrose now clarifies his earlier confidence in the

ability of reason to mitigate the passions: "The mind is good if it is directed toward reason, but not at all perfect unless it enjoys the rule of Christ." It is in Him that we can control our passions by the redirection of our desire to "things that are above, not with those that are earthly and corruptible." Christ's resurrection both defeated the old man, the carnal man, and allowed the new man to rise.

Man therefore now has a choice to make--he can consider Christ's sacrifice and turn to God and away from sin, or he can turn away from God. To convey this message simply and clearly, Ambrose uses the metaphor of the body-soul conflict:

> Therefore Christ died so that we also might die to sin and rise again to God. Our flesh is dead; why does it live again to sin? Why is it obedient to sin again? Why does sin rule again among the dead, when death is the end of sin? We have died in the flesh, we have been renewed in the spirit. Let us walk in the spirit, because we have received the spirit of Christ. If then Christ is in us, let our flesh be dead by reason of sin, but let our spirit live by reason of justification.

Since Christ has made the sacrifice, we should not revert to carnal ways: we should not "put on the clothing of the old man which we have taken off" (p. 132). Put another way, "We have mortified the members of our body; why do its vices sprout up again?" The soul should remain "unconquered" by the body and outer nature, "so that it may rend the body and divert itself of fleshly feelings" (p. 140).

The man who lives in the proper way is anyone who does not regard "the inconveniences of the body or the adversities of the world." If one loses health, or children, or falls into captivity, he should not consider these "external advantages and bodily joys" of any importance. He is not weak in regard to wrongs done to his own, nor anxious about

the burial of his body, for he knows that heaven is his due" (p. 142). The just man will not regard externals. He will not regard sickness and weakness as hindrances to good works, and he will see that anyone who does regard bodily health as important is subjecting himself to his body:

> For such a man puts more value in the enjoyment of the body than in the strength of the spirit; he desires these things to which he is a slave, although he has the ability rather to exercise control over them; he grows in poverty when he has the power to be beyond worldly riches, for the man of faith has a whole world of riches; he weeps over his lowly status, when he ought to look down upon the powers of princes and rule over the rich and powerful. (p. 143)

For Ambrose the concern for physical health is symptomatic of the carnality of man in general, and he concludes the first book of the _Jacob_ by summarizing that if one would be happy he must look to his soul and to heaven. If he is afflicted by physical infirmity, he should not bother, but he should lay aside his body like a broken harp: "Just so will such a man as we have here allow the harp that is his body to lie unused. . . . He will sustain himself on God's words and the prophetic writings and will hold that sweet and pleasant good in his soul and embrace it in his mind" (p. 145).

Ambrose thus was aware of the metaphorical nature of the body-soul conflict and could use it to clarify and simplify the complex nature of human passions and free will. Augustine, as we have seen, realized that scriptural writers were using "that mode of speech" in which the part stands for the whole. He is able to interpret Paul's writings, pointing out Paul's use of the body-soul metaphor, and he is able to use the metaphor himself. In the _Christian Combat_, Augustine responds to the question, "How do we overcome the Devil, since we do not see him?"

The answer is that Christ is our model in the subjugation of his own flesh, according to Paul:

> We have a Master who has deigned to show us how invisible foes are conquered, for the Apostle said of Him: "Freeing Himself of His body, He made an example of the principalities and powers, confidently triumphing over them within Himself." Consequently, when invisible and sinful desires are overcome, we then overcome the unseen power of our enemy. Hence, by overcoming within ourselves the inordinate love of things temporal, we are necessarily, within ourselves, overcoming him also who rules within men by these sinful desires.[45]

Paul's phrase, "Freeing Himself of His body," used as a model for man, is interpreted as "overcoming within ourselves the inordinate love of things temporal" by Augustine.

And Augustine is both able to see the metaphor being used by Paul and ready to use it himself. Pointing now to the Apostle as a model, who wrote, "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps after preaching to others I myself should be found rejected,"[46] Augustine first interprets the metaphor and then uses it himself:

> From this we are to understand that the Apostle himself had won an interior victory over the powers of this world, such as he had spoken of concerning the Lord, whom he professes to imitate. Therefore, we also should imitate him, as he exhorts us, and, if we would overcome the world, we should chastise our body and bring it into subjection.

To see that the body-soul conflict was a valued metaphor for Augustine, and that he used it readily, we need only to look at the <u>Confessions</u>, where he uses it to chart his spiritual development, and in his sermons, where it is a powerful rhetorical device.

In the <u>Confessions</u>, Augustine closely paraphrases Paul as he argues that the Platonists are unaware of the turbulence of the moral struggle, but not the biblical writers:

> For though a man delight in the law of God after the inward man, what shall he do with that other law in his members which warreth against the law of his mind, and bringeth him into captivity to the law of sin, which is in his members.[47]

Augustine remembers his own fight against the custom of his sins as he began to move with a new will to worship God and to enjoy Him. Augustine was tormented by the struggle of the two wills, "one old and the other new, one carnal, the other spiritual."[48] In the most dramatic incident recalled in the Confessions, that moment when Augustine finally achieved a feeling of certainty about his beliefs, Augustine heard a child chanting, "Tolle, lege; tolle, lege," and he did take up the Bible to read:

> I grasped, opened, and in silence read that paragraph on which my eyes first fell--"not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." No further would I read, nor did I need; for instantly, as the sentence ended--by a light, as it were of security infused into my heart--all the gloom of doubt vanished away.[49]

Augustine thus chooses to describe the most precious of his theological developments as a resolution to a conflict between his fleshly and spiritual impulses.

But the conflict had a greater contribution to make than simply to demonstrate a private struggle. Like other thinkers of the Middle Ages who call on the body-soul conflict to explain the nature of moral choice, Augustine puts it to repeated use in his sermons, where it is invoked to clarify the spiritual significance of the Incarnation and fasting, of baptism, vigils, and circumcision. The motif had the virtue of simplification as well as of drama, and Augustine uses it on major occasions of the liturgical year, in sermons for Christmas, Lent and Easter.[50]

In a sermon on the Feast of the Nativity, Augustine presents the Incarnation of Christ as the redemption of a weaker flesh by a purer one: "The likeness of our sinful flesh was born so that this sinful flesh might be cleansed" (p. 5). Augustine congratulates the youths who have chosen to become celibate monks, because they are renouncing the flesh:

> For you came into existence through carnal union; . . . and to you, whom He has called in a special way to spiritual nuptials, He has granted the grace to scorn earthly ones.

He similarly congratulates the holy virgins in that they may wed Christ without defilement. And on becoming flesh, Christ did not lose his immortality, "but gave immortality to this flesh" (p. 15), or to sinful man.

In Sermon 193, also a Christmas sermon, Augustine presents the Christian message in an elementary way. If one wishes to be with the Lord in heaven, he must lead a good life:

> Let him restrain his tongue from evil and his lips from deceit; let him turn from evil and do good; let him thus be a man of good will. Let him "seek after peace and pursue it" . . . . (p. 36)

But he imagines that someone might protest that this kind of life is very difficult to lead. Importantly, Augustine has the questioner present his dilemma in terms of the conflict of the body and the soul; and Augustine then resolves the issue with the same metaphor:

> But, O man, if you say: "Behold, to wish is within my power, but I do not find the strength to accomplish what is good"; if [you] are delighted "with the law of God according to the inner man," but [you] see "another law in [your] members," hold fast to your good will and cry out in the following words of the Apostle: "Unhappy man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Augustine continues that if one has a good will he should ask for divine help, God's grace, to fight against "the law of [one's] carnal members." Throughout the Christmas sermons, Augustine's message is that Christ in the Incarnation was the expression of God's love, intended to aid men in their carnality:

> He came in the flesh, intending to cleanse the vices of the flesh. He came, clothed in healing human clay, to cure our interior eyes which our outer earthly vesture had blinded. . . . (p. 42)

The Lenten Season with its fasting was a time when sermons using the conflict of the body and the soul were very suitable--or to put it another way, the Lenten Season encouraged the physical privation of Christians as a remembrance of Christ's suffering in the flesh to redeem man--and Augustine stressed the symbolic importance of fasting:

> An appropriately solemn sermon is your due so that the word of God, brought to you through my ministry, may sustain you in spirit while you fast in body and so that the inner man, thus refreshed by suitable food, may be able to accomplish and to persevere courageously in the disciplining of the outer man. For, to my spirit of devotion, it seems fitting that we, who are about to honor the Passion of our crucified God in the very near future, should fashion for ourselves a cross of the bodily pleasures in need of restraint, as the Apostle says: "And they who belong to Christ have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires."[51]

The body is to be chastised, but the significance extends beyond fasting and abstinence from physical pleasures. What is called for is an increasing detachment from the body, as the Christian moves toward good works and love of God: If you have refrained from adultery, now put aside lawful intercourse; if you have not been drunk, now fast:

> You, who fast even on other days, increase your good works on these days. You, who crucify your body by perpetual

> continence on other days, throughout these days cleave to your God by more frequent and more fervent prayer. (p. 85)

The disciplining of the body, in whatever degree, represents turning back to God. Augustine is thus able to extend the metaphor of fasting to non-physical matters: "Above all else, my brethren, fast from strife and discord." When one calls to God, "That voice is certainly not one of strife, but of charity; not of the flesh, but of the heart" (p. 86).

Augustine in like fashion broadens the concept of fasting to the ordering of the Christian life in Sermon 207. During Lent we should imitate the cross of Christ, "fastening to it our passions subdued by the nails of abstinence." Augustine implores us to control our bodily desires even more than usual. Also, we should be merciful, since there is a parallel between physical discipline and purity of prayer:

> Let prayer be chaste, lest, perhaps, we crave not what charity but what cupidity seeks; let us not call down any evil upon our enemies; let us not rage passionately in prayer against those whom we cannot harm by actual injury or revenge. Surely, just as we are rendered fit for prayer by almsdeeds and fasting, so our prayer itself gives alms when it is directed and poured forth not only for friends, but for enemies as well and when it refrains from anger, hatred, and harmful vices. (p. 91)

Fasting thus extends to abstinence from vice. Augustine concludes with a dramatic contrast based on the metaphor of the body, in which he urges us to discipline our prayer: "Let it always fast from hatred and feast upon love."

In discussing Matthew 3, 16-4, 2, Augustine answers the question as to why Christ fasted after, rather than before, he was baptized. The series of events were that Christ was baptized, came up from the

water, was addressed as the Son of God by a voice from heaven, and then went into the desert where He fasted and was tempted by the Devil. The reason that fasting followed Christ's baptism was that it had nothing to do with the baptism, but with the coming temptation, as the model of how to overcome temptation:

> Therefore, men must fast when a similar struggle with temptation occurs. . . so that the body may discharge its military service by its discipline and the soul may gain a victory by its humiliation. (p. 99)

By fasting aright we direct our souls to God:

> Everyone who fasts with right dispositions either in a spirit of sincere faith humbles his soul in prayerful lamentation and in corporal penance, or directs his intention, raised above carnal enticement by a holy, spiritual delight in truth and wisdom, to the endurance of hunger and thirst.

Physical fasting, Augustine points out, offers "feasts to the mind" and can be understood as rejecting the old cloth and the old wineskins of Matthew 9, 15-16.

In a sermon delivered to a congregation being prepared for baptism, Augustine applies the metaphorical use of the flesh to underscore the spiritual transformation which the newly baptized will be undergoing. He makes a spirited argument for leaving the carnal ways and the world behind. Like the man conquering his carnal desires and being jubilant,[52] these beginners in the faith will come to a similar joy "when you cast aside the delight of the world." He urges his listeners to prepare for Christ by renouncing their former carnal life:

> Strip yourself of the old man that you may be clothed with the new. The Lord is entering upon an agreement with you. You have lived for the world; you have given yourselves to flesh and blood; you have borne the likeness of an earthly man. As, therefore, you have borne the likeness of one who is of the earth, so now, in addition, bear the image of Him who is from heaven. Because the Word was made flesh,

> my speech is that of a man, namely, that as you presented your bodies to sin as the instrument of iniquity, so now you may present your members to God as instruments of justice. (pp. 151-52)

The metaphor of the body as the source of sin is modified to show that the body executes the sin as well. He assures his audience that Satan will not hurt them "if he does not possess your members" (p. 152). If the Christians want to win the prize of immortal life, they must follow the example of the boxers in the vigor of their battle:

> If you wish so to fight that you do not beat the air in vain but so as to strike your opponent manfully, then chastise your body and bring it into subjection that, abstaining from all things and contending lawfully, you may in triumph share the heavenly prize and the incorruptible crown. (p. 155)

In this life they should "put to death their members here upon earth," the members defined as "immorality, uncleanness, lust, evil desire, and covetousness," and become themselves participants in the life and body of Christ.

For the vigil before Easter, Augustine again uses the body to suggest man's weakness and difficulty in coming to God, as he discusses the reason for vigils in general. Being awake is a reminder that in heaven we will be alive and awake forever, just as sleep signifies death. In this life, and in this body, "which is corruptible and a load upon the soul," we must sleep to restore our health. However, by watching we resist the body and show our desire for heavenly life:

> And, in this way, [*i.e.*, by maintaining vigils] each one keeps watch chastely, innocently, and assiduously, meditating undoubtedly on the life of the angels--for, in so far as the weakness of the body is an earthly burden, heavenly desires are frustrated--and striving against this death-bringing mass by longer vigil so that he may gain merit for eternal life.

The fight against sleep is a fight against the needs of the body, and in this conflict we illustrate our desire to turn to God.

In a sermon for Easter Sunday (pp. 203ff.) Augustine presents in the simplest way the central truths of the fast on this most holy day. He discusses Christ's sacrifice and what men must do in response to it, and he frequently uses the flesh-spirit conflict to illustrate his sermon. After the Fall, every man has been born "subject to these laws of the lower world," i.e., of death, fatigue, wretchedness (pp. 204-05), except Christ, who was conceived without concupiscence and lived without sin and was crucified for our sin, "so that on the cross He might show the destruction of our old man"; and His resurrection showed us a new life.

> To symbolize this fact, circumcision was imposed upon the ancients, so that on the eighth day every male child was circumcised. The circumcision was performed with stone knives because Christ was the Rock. That circumcision typified the stripping off of the carnal life on the eighth day through the Resurrection of Christ. (p. 205)

Christ was in the tomb on the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, and "He arose on the eighth day; and His resurrection renews us. Therefore, by rising on the eighth day He circumcises us."

Now what is the new life like after the carnal life has been cut away? Augustine says generally that we should look to Christ rather than to the world (p. 206). As "sons of God" rather than as "sons of men," we should not seek happiness as "a robber, a scoundrel, a fornicator, an evil-doer, a law-breaker, a person stained with all vices, steeped in all crimes or outrages." We should not seek happiness in gold and worldly pride. All these ways of life suggest the old man, the carnal life that Christ has redeemed us from. Christ knew physical

pain and suffering:

> He was hungry and thirsty; He was weary and He slept; He worked wonders and He suffered evils; He was scourged, crowned with thorns, covered with spittle, beaten with cudgels, fixed to a cross, wounded with a lance, placed in a tomb. (p. 208)

We should therefore look to Christ for happiness, and renounce our former, carnal ways:

> Now, therefore, while we are living in this corruptible flesh, by changing our ways, let us die with Christ. (p. 209)

Augustine's message for Easter thus is organized around the concept of the Incarnation as the divine response to man's fleshly ways. By turning to one who suffered in the flesh to redeem us from the flesh, and whose resurrection symbolizes his cutting away of our carnality, we can be happy.

In Ambrose and Augustine, two patristic writers aware of the metaphorical nature of the conflict between the body and the soul in Scripture, we have seen the conflict clarify and simplify complex matters of morality, chart a personal spiritual development, and function as an effective rhetorical device. I will conclude the section on medieval writers who use the conflict to illustrate the moral struggle by looking at Bonaventure's <u>Breviloquium</u> because it points to the continuity of the tradition in the thirteenth century and because it is--among many--an authoritative, late, and basic statement of the tradition. In the <u>Breviloquium</u>, Bonaventure's analysis of the soul, the body, the composite man, and the nature and process of sin is worthy of some attention as a fairly complete and systematic discussion of the relationship between the body and the soul; and it testifies to the health of the body-soul explanation of the

moral struggle in the late Middle Ages. Bonaventure first describes the soul and the body and explains that the composite man perceives the inner and outer world. The first parents made the wrong choice when they chose to look at the exterior world related by the flesh rather than the interior world of reason. As a result of the first sin, man has a weak and rebellious body, and he, like the first parents, faces a choice between sensual instinct and right reason. The flesh is capable of causing venial sins independently, and it can lead to mortal sins through the enjoyment of the sense data by the soul.

For Bonaventure the soul has being, life, intelligence, and freedom.[53] It is indissoluble, immortal, and separable from the body; and it is not only the form of the body, but also an individual substance, operating both as the "perfection" and as the "mover" of the body (p. 95). It has a vegetative function in its capacity for generation, nutrition, and growth. In its sensitive function it perceives through the senses, retains through the memory, and collates the data through that imagination (that is, it finds the common sensibles). In the intellective capacity, it "discerns truth through reason, rejects evil through the irascible appetite, and desires good through the concupiscible appetite." The rational faculty is thus cognitive, in that it finds truth; but it is also effective, in its desiring and rejecting (p. 96). The cognitive power, the intellect and reason, is divided into a "speculative and practical intellect and also a higher and lower reason."

The body was created from the dust of the ground and in Paradise was obedient to the soul, destined to reproduce without lust, and to be free of decay and death. In the creation of man, God showed his

power by making him of opposite substances:

> That His Power might thus be revealed in man, God made him out of two completely opposing principles, combined in a single person or nature. These are the body and the soul, the former being a material substance, the latter a spiritual and immaterial one. Within the genus "substance" these two stand farthest apart.

The tension between the substances which constitute the body and the soul, and the fact that God could mold them into a single being, is proof of his omnipotence. The body reflects the soul's ascending capacity and its uprightness by standing erect.

The body was also subject to the soul:

> Thus, He made for the rational soul a body so completely obedient that it was free from all actual hostility or rebellion, all propensity to lust, all enfeeblement, all mortal dissolution.

The soul was innocent, and the body impassible, but both would be subject to change (p. 99). The body was sustained by the Tree of Life; and it relied as well on the "influencing principle" of the soul, on its own good construction, and on God's governance.

The composite man has two ways of perceiving, within and without, "of the mind and of the flesh," suited to the inner and exterior books:

> Accordingly, there are two books, one written within, and that is inscribed by God's eternal Art and Wisdom; the other written without, and that is the perceptible world. (p. 101)

To these books, of God's Wisdom and physical reality, correspond three orders of beings:

> Now, there existed a creature, the angel, whose inner perception was fitted to the understanding of the inner book. There existed another, the brute animal, whose perception was entirely external. To complete creation it was suitable that there should be made yet another creature whose twofold perception would be fitted to the understanding of both the inner and the outer books: that of Wisdom, and of its work. (pp. 101-02)

To the faculties of perception correspond motions. Man can be moved either by reason or sensual instinct, by the mind or by the flesh. As long as the mind is in control, there is order: "otherwise the natural order is subverted and the soul falls from its position of authority" (p. 102). Since man was created from nothing he was by nature weak and subject to fall. But God did give him right conscience, synteresis, and actual and sanctifying grace.[54]

When the first parents sinned, they looked at the wrong book: their epistemological priorities were upside down:

> Now, the woman, hearing in the external way the serpent's suggestion, failed to read the internal book that was open and quite legible to the right judgment of reason. (p. 115)

She looked to the "perishable good" rather than to the "infallible truth." In listening to the serpent and in consenting, the corruption went from the senses to the will and then back to the senses:

> Temptation began at the bottom and attained the top: it began with hearing, passed through desire, and attained consent. Conversely, disorder began at the top and went down to the bottom.[55]

After the woman sinned, she brought the man to sin, and he also looked to the exterior world: "He, too, turned to the external book and to perishable good." Both, in turning to the external book stepped down to the level of the merely sensitive souls.

The first parents sinned in mind and body. They had acted through "spiritual pride and physical gluttony." It was just that as they had been disobedient to God, their flesh should be disobedient to them, "particularly the organs intended for generative function." A further punishment of the body was work, hunger, and thirst:

> Again, because the man had spurned the supreme Delight to

> seek pleasure in his body, by a just judgment of God he was afflicted with hard work and with hunger and thirst.

Similarly, because the soul had turned to "material satisfaction," the soul was sentenced to be separated from its body at the time of the body's death, when the body would return to dust. A just reversal was the sentence:

> In the order of nature, God had given to man a body which should obey the soul, procreate without lust, grow without defect, and remain free from the corruption of death. (p. 119)

Now, the opposite conditions will prevail--the body will be a victim of "pain, imperfection, labor, disease, and affliction" (p. 120). And the soul will be plagued by "weakness, ignorance, malice, and concupiscence." Man lost "the beatific glory in both his body and his soul."

Bonaventure toys with a consideration of what would have happened if Adam had not sinned. The answer is that Adam's descendants would have had souls united to obedient bodies--"to flesh both immortal and obedient." But the question is moot:

> But Adam did sin; his flesh did reject the authority of his soul. (p. 124)

Consequently we have rebellious bodies, and we have difficulty controlling our "lower impulses."

> As soul and body are one being, the soul must, then, lead the body, or be dragged along by it. Because it cannot lead rebellious flesh, it must be led, incurring the disease of concupiscence.

It is this lust, the physical passion, which is original sin (pp. 124-25).

Bonaventure discusses the difference between venial and mortal sins in Book III of the <u>Breviloquium</u>, and he notes that there is "suggestion, anticipated satisfaction, consent, and action," in the

process of sin (p. 128). He quotes James I, 14-15, "But every man is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured. Then when concupiscence hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin. But sin, when it is completed, begetteth death," and argues that if consent and action are absent, the sin is only venial. An intermediate case is when the will consents to enjoy what the senses have suggested, as in sins of the flesh, but does not will the action. The sin in this case "is still mortal, because, though the woman alone eats, the whole man deserves condemnation" (p. 129). The analogy to Adam and Eve is that the masculine part of man is rational, the feminine part sensual, and that "the senses must be subject to reason as Eve was subject to Adam."[56] Mortal sin is a destruction of the order of justice, and venial sin is a disturbance of the order of justice, which demands, among other things,[57] that right reason be preferred to sensuality.

The flesh is of course "full of desires," but as long as one does not prefer the flesh to right reason, the sin is only venial. It is only when the reason itself consents to prefer sensual pleasure to right reason that there is mortal sin. Bonaventure notes that the senses were manageable in Paradise, but that now they are turbulent:

> In the state of innocence, the senses were moved by reason alone. If man had stood firm, there could have been no venial sin. But now the senses wrestle with reason, whether we like it or not, and inevitably we do commit some venial sins through the reactions of impulse. It would be possible to keep any one of them under control, but not all of them together, for they are not only sins but also penalties of sin.

The venial sins are not transformed into mortal sins unless the reason either commits or consents to enjoy the sin. In sensual delight, when

reason submits to sensuality, "then the feminine principle is bowing to the serpent"; the lower part of the reason "obeys the call of the senses." In this case, both parts of reason are culpable, because the man "should have restrained her and prevented her from obeying the serpent" (p. 130). Every sin is thus a pattern of the primal sin.

The Breviloquium is a convenient digest of attitudes toward the conflict between the body and the soul in the Middle Ages. Bonaventure does not mention that he is writing with a "mode of speech" or that he is continuing a scriptural tradition, but the body-soul conflict in the Breviloquium is used to explain man's moral condition in the simplest terms. Man was made of antithetical substances, he could have had a flesh which would have been a faithful and obedient servant; but, because the first parents looked to the book of nature, to data supplied by their senses, man lost his peaceful condition. Now he is punished by a rebellious flesh which has become hostile to the soul, and which relays temptation as well as information about the world to the soul.

We have seen so far in this chapter that in the Middle Ages an epistemology in which sense data was both subordinate and threatening to the truth within man's soul and a scriptural use of flesh to represent man apart from God contributed to a metaphor of conflict between the body and the soul as a simplification of the moral struggle. We have also seen that prominent church figures from the early and late Middle Ages used the conflict to explain the process of sin and the choices that man has. As we will see in the next two chapters, traditions of images expressing the body-soul relationship existed in the

Latin and Middle English religious literature and can be found in the Debate Between the Body and the Soul, enriching the drama present in the poem. But as will be clear from an examination of the stanzaic Morte Arthur in the last chapter, the body-soul conflict and its imagery had an effect pervasive enough to be found in secular literature where one would not expect it. The conflict constituted a major way in which medieval thinkers understood their moral conditions, and it was a conflict which they incorporated in their fiction.

In asserting that the body-soul conflict with its images left its trace in literature, one raises some questions about the presence of multiple meanings in secular literature. How are we justified in arguing for meanings which lie concealed in the narrative of a tale? What conventions in the interpretation of literature prevailed in the Middle Ages which would make an author expect his readers to look beyond the simple narrative of his fiction? The discovery of religious meaning in medieval secular literature is a topic which has been energetically discussed for the last twenty years,[58] and from the research has come the conclusion that allegorical interpretation of scripture became an established practice in the early Middle Ages and was given wide use throughout the period. The study of biblical exegesis in the Middle Ages is an enormous topic, outside the range of the present study;[59] but biblical exegesis unquestionably bears on the study of literature in the Middle Ages. The point of disagreement among scholars has been the extent to which the methods of biblical exegesis are appropriate to the interpretation of literary texts. I would like to review some of the studies which describe the medieval allegorical

reading of Scripture, the propriety of applying such an approach to secular literature, and some objections to the approach. We will find that the best criterion for identifying religious meanings, other than that of contextual probability, is the presence of a tradition which a poet could draw on. And in the chapter following, we will see that the conflict between the body and the soul had a tradition of imagery widely known and used by writers in the Middle Ages.

The Middle Ages had access to innumerable authoritative statements justifying the figurative interpretation of Scripture. Citing the "Littera enim occidit, Spiritus autem vivificat"[60] of Paul, Augustine in the De Doctrina Christiana says that there is something slavish about pursuing the literal level of interpretation and not rising to a spiritual understanding:

> There is a miserable servitude of the spirit in this habit of taking signs for things, so that one is not able to raise the eye of the mind above things that are corporal and created to drink in eternal light.[61]

In approaching Scripture the rule to follow in deciding whether to use a literal or figurative interpretation is the presence or absence of charity and Christian truth: "Whatever appears in the divine Word that does not literally pertain to virtuous behavior or to the truth of the faith you must take to be figurative."

Augustine's formulation is not idiosyncratic. He is working in the same tradition as Origen before him, who found the three levels of literal, moral, and spiritual meanings in biblical texts,[62] and Eucher of Lyons after him, who wrote:

> The body of Sacred Scripture, as it is handed down, is in the letter; its soul is in the moral sense, which is called

> tropicus; its spirit is in the higher understanding, which is called anagogic.[63]

A fourfold scheme of biblical interpretation was advanced by Gregory in his Homilies on Ezechiel:

> The words of Holy Scripture are square stones, for they can stand on all sides, because on no sides are there rough spots. For in every past event that they narrate, in every future event that they foretell, in every moral saying that they speak, and in every spiritual sense they stand, as it were on a different side, because they have no roughness.[64]

All three agree that the discovery of spiritual meaning is an essential step in fully understanding Scripture. And there were many other spokesmen for figurative interpretation of Scripture. T. A. Collins has shown that Clement of Alexandria believed "that it was the very nature of higher truths that they should be communicated only through symbols,"[65] and that Didymus the Blind wrote that Scripture had literal and spiritual meanings. In addition, there were countless writers who used the allegorical method without formulating a theoretical foundation.

The spiritual interpretation of scriptural texts continues throughout the Middle Ages. Dante refers to the four levels in his Letter to Can Grande as first literal and secondly as allegorical, moral, or anagogical;[66] and in Il Convivio he divides the four senses and discusses each.[67] The significant difference between Dante's scheme and those of the writers cited earlier is that Dante uses at least the allegorical level to analyze non-Christian texts:

> The second [meaning] is called allegorical, and this is the meaning hidden under the cloak of fables, truth concealed beneath a fair fiction--as when Ovid, saying that Orpheus with his lute tamed wild beasts and moved trees and rocks, means that the wise man, with the instrument of his voice, softens and humbles cruel hearts.

Between the patristic period and Dante, writers had broadened the use of biblical exegesis and applied it to non-scriptural contexts. John Chydenius has plotted this development,[68] pointing to Augustine's concept of vestigia trinitatis in the world of nature as a Christian Neo-Platonist's presentation of universal symbolism. Chydenius finds similar formulations in Pseudo-Dionysius, Eriugena, Hugh of St. Victor ("Omnis natura Deum loquitur"[69]) and Alan of Lille:

> Omnis mundi creatura
> quasi liber et pictura
> nobis est et speculum.[70]

Chenu has noted that Hugh of St. Victor also wrote, "The entire sense-perceptible world is like a sort of book written by the finger of God."[71]

With the awareness that all of nature can be read like Scripture, it is not surprising to see Dante reading pagan literature the same way. Erich Auerbach has shown that biblical narrative itself was written in a style which demanded an imaginative reading--a style in which "everything is not externalized and made specific as it is in Homer, or Tacitus, . . . a complex of meaning is not stated but lies in the background."[72] Auerbach believes that this kind of narrative is indicative of a way of thinking which the Middle Ages inherited:

> In this conception, an occurrence on earth signifies not only itself but at the same time another, which it predicts or confirms, without prejudice to the immediate reality here and now.[73]

What Chenu has written of the twelfth century could in many ways apply to the whole medieval period:

> Masters in the schools, mystics, exegetes, students of nature, seculars, religious, writers, and artists--these men of the twelfth century had in common with all other men of the Middle Ages the conviction that all natural or

historical reality possessed a signification which transscended its crude reality and which a certain symbolic dimension of that reality would reveal to man's mind.[74]

The faculty for symbolic interpretation of non-scriptural literature can be seen when Boccaccio, able to see the different levels of Christian meaning in the Divine Comedy, referred to Dante as a Christian poet, who was "not a maker of myths, but rather a Catholic and divine theologian."[75]

In spite of the prevalence of allegorical exegesis in medieval religious literature, and statements suggesting the interpretation of secular texts the same way, there has been much modern disagreement about the propriety of using the method of biblical exegesis to interpret secular literature of the Middle Ages. E. Talbot Donaldson, for example, says that while he does not know "of any valid theoretical objection to patristic criticism," he does object to violating the probability that such a reading was intended by a medieval author:

> I do. . . object to a procedure which substitutes for the art of the poet the learning or good intentions of the reader.[76]

Donaldson's argument is that the work itself should make it clear that the poet intended a spiritual reading of his text. R. E. Kaske's response is agreement, but he turns the argument around to say that when enough parallels exist between a figure in a literary piece and a figure in exegetical interpretation, we have to admit that the poet intended us to find religious overtones:

> The normal discipline of scholarly argument, of course, demands that exegetical interpretation of an individual figure or allusion be supported by well-documented parallels from the exegetical literature itself. More extended exegetical allusion in a given work must be supported by an accumulation of parallels large enough or by a pattern complex enough, that to consider it accidental would outrage

> probability. But if this is so, the same scholarly discipline seems to dictate that the only conclusive evidence for the absence of exegetical allusion in a work. . . will be a demonstrable absence of such parallels.[77]

And Alvin Lee, applying Northrup Frye's interpretive scheme to medieval literature, also argues for contextual probability:

> The evidence as to what is good commentary is the structure of images in the text itself.[78]

The best test of a poet's intentions, including whether or not religious meanings are there to be found, is the text itself.

But the contextual test is not infallible. What might "outrage probability" for one reader might not for another. Some modern readers are clearly more easily convinced of allegorical meanings than others. In his review of The Meaning of Courtly Love, a collection of essays from a conference at Albany, Charles Muscatine objects to D. W. Robertson's dismissal of courtly love as mere idolatrous love and suggests a topic for a future conference: "What are the cultural bases for a puritan revaluation of medieval culture in the middle of the twentieth century?"[79] Muscatine is, of course, mocking; but he raises a serious question: Who is the best judge of appropriate categories to discuss medieval literature--a theologian or a man of letters? Should we turn, he asks, to Bradwardine or Chaucer for "evidence of medieval sensibility?" I am not sure that we have to choose one or the other, but in any event we should examine more objections of those who are uneasy about the search for multiple meanings in medieval literature, especially late medieval literature. Six objections are outlined by Morton Bloomfield in his "Symbolism in Medieval Literature," which appeared in Modern Philology,[80] and I

would like to examine them, because they summarize the major objections to the exegetical method.

Bloomfield's first observation is really a concession, that all literature with meaning is symbolic: "A literary work of any sort and of any period always has some symbolic meaning." Accordingly, ". . . all literature has a nucleus and a cortex and conveys sententia." His second objection is that the growing interest in literal interpretation in the late Middle Ages made allegorical interpretation outmoded:

> The emphasis on the symbolic as opposed to the literal approach to the Bible is not characteristic of the later Middle Ages, except perhaps in sermons, which are very conservative and must, of necessity, stress the moral. (76)

The decline of interest in the spiritual interpretation corresponds to "the rise of the great vernacular literatures."

The third reason not to expect three or four levels of meaning in medieval literature is that this method was not even applied "mechanically or completely" in biblical studies. What seems likely is that the defenders of secular literature were against the wall and had to prove utilitas for the literature they loved (78).

Fourth, those who would see more than one meaning do not make a distinction which would be natural to the Middle Ages--the difference between words inspired by God and those written by ordinary men (77). Only one patristic author seems to have found levels of meaning in nonreligious literature.[81]

Bloomfield's fifth point, and the one he considers of first importance, is the absence of a check on the interpretations:

> The multileveled system of symbolism provides no criterion of corrigibility except, as in the case of biblical

> exegesis, tradition. There is no way, seeing the wide variety of symbolic interpretations of the same thing, to correct any particular interpretation. At the most, one might say a certain interpretation is not right, but of many alternate explanations there is no way of deciding which one is correct, for supporting texts from the wide variety of medieval and patristic theology can be found for each one. (80)

Allied to the fifth point is the sixth: the exegetical method is oversimple, imposing "a non-historical order and system on what was in fact disordered and unsystematic" (81).

These six reasons for distrusting the discovery of multiple meanings in secular literature of the Middle Ages must be met if one sees Christian meanings in medieval nonreligious literature and wants to understand their presence and function. And it is no small concession for Bloomfield to admit that "meaning is at least partially symbolic" (74). At the same time we should also concede that the multiple method was not consistently applied to Scripture and that hardly any Church figure said anything about applying it to secular literature, although, as we shall see, authors <u>did</u> turn to secular literature for Christian meanings. D. W. Robertson reminds us of the commentaries on classical works, such as Fulgentius' commentary on the <u>Aeneid</u>, the twelfth century commentary on Ovid by Arnulf of Orleans, and the fourteenth century <u>Fulgentius Metaforalis</u> by John Ridewal.[82]

We are left with three of Bloomfield's objections to the use of the exegetical method as an interpretive device for medieval literature. The later Middle Ages used the symbolic mode primarily in its sermons rather than in more learned writings, organized use of the symbolic method in interpretation imposes order on an unsystematic process, and there is no way to check interpretations except by tradition. The first

argument can simply be inverted. The later Middle Ages inherited and made widely known in the vernacular languages through its preachers the exegetical methods of the Latin tradition:

> It is out of this tradition, containing as it did an elaborated exegesis, a developed understanding of the auctores, and a critical language not perfectly univocal, that the fourteenth century developed an unmistakably spiritual understanding of fiction. This understanding came into being as a byproduct of the work of the preachers, especially the friars. . . . The spiritual sense of fiction is a natural and almost inevitable result of the growing importance and popularity of preaching and of the attendant pressures to produce attractive and effective material for sermons.[83]

Rather than saying that the literal became more popular among biblical commentators, we should say that the tropological simply became popular. It was during this time that the spiritual meaning was given its broadest exercise.

Bloomfield's objection that "the use of the symbolic method in medieval literature is essentially simplistic. It imposes a non-historical order and system on what was in fact disordered and unsystematic" seems at first quite accurate. Consider the complex situation suggested by Huppé and Robertson:

> By the time of Chaucer and Boccaccio the common fund of scriptural imagery had been expanded in various ways. The book of God's creation was read in exactly the same way as the book of God's Word, so that values on the level of sentence were given to animals, birds, fish, trees, and stones not found in the Bible.[84]

In addition, several meanings might be applied to the same item, creating for Bloomfield a baffling conflict: "With sixteen meanings for the peacock, who is to decide between them?" (81). Augustine noted that the lion could stand for Christ and for the Devil,[85] and Chenu has observed, "The most constant and not least disconcerting

characteristic of the symbol was its polysemousness."[86] Different commentators interpreted the breasts of the Spouse in the Song of Songs as "chastity and humility; they were the arms of love with which the Virgin held Christ, God and man; they were flesh and spirit; they were carnal sin and the sophistries of concupiscence."

When one turns to secular literature with such an arsenal of possible interpretations, as preachers in the late Middle Ages did, the effect is an interpretive carte blanche. The interpreter can develop any aspect of a work that he wants to, and we, six centuries later, can only be amazed at the richness of the possible levels of meaning. In the Pardoner's Tale, for example,

> the old man may be a figure of Death, or the Old Adam, but he does not have to be literally more than a mysterious old man who is tired of life. . . . The spiritual exegete needs only a single vivid connection with the language of spiritual reference to begin his interpretation of a secular story in spiritual terms. Here are connections in plenty, asking to be developed. The old man is the vetus homo, the wandering Jew, Death himself. The boy is novus homo, the child of Holy Mother Church. The tree is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the tree of Death--at the same time it may be the cross, because it is under this tree that the old man left death, "by my fey."[87]

The method of spiritual exegesis is indeed complex, as Bloomfield argues. But it is hardly being oversimplified when one says that it allows a reading of secular literature in which any likely connection between a fact in the narrative and a spiritual fact can be made. Rather than being realized in rigid three- and four-fold schemes of meanings, the method allows very diverse interpretations.

It is this variety of possible interpretations which bothers Bloomfield the most--there is "no criterion of corrigibility except. . . tradition." One cannot correct a reading except by showing what is

palpably false. This criticism misses the point of the symbolic approach--the method functions best when it is uncovering all the possible spiritual meanings, because an imaginative reading in search of such meanings is what the literature would have received in the late Middle Ages. The aim of the historical scholar, then, should be to uncover as many possible interpretations of a piece of literature as he can and as he can justify on the basis of contextual probability.

We progress in understanding new depths in literature when likely patterns are discovered. For example, by approaching the York Creation of Adam and Eve with an understanding of typology, Louis Leiter has discovered Adam as a figure of Christ "giving shape, resonance, and significance" to the basic story.[88] We are reminded of Christ throughout the play as a result of "Adamic typology" which "foreshadows similarities and dissimilarities between the first man and Christ, between birth from earth and birth from heaven through flesh."[89] Similarly, V. A. Kolve has shown that the Corpus Christi plays not only dramatize biblical facts, but that they can also refer to two or more facts simultaneously. Abel is literally the son of Adam and Eve and the murderer of his brother. But he is also a figure of Christ, and Cain is "a figure of Christians who cheat the Church of its firstfruits or tithes."[90] In Noah and the Flood "the figural possibilities are too rich to be confined to a single interpretation."[91] The flood is like the second coming of Christ, and the Ark is the Church.[92]

As for Bloomfield's contention that only tradition can decide what meanings can be found in the literature, we must agree. Only

elements which are attested in the body of literature and art preceding and contemporary with the literature under discussion should be brought to bear on it. Saul Brody has worked with one such tradition and has found that lepers in the Middle Ages were considered morally as well as physically diseased:

> The medieval poets inherited an ancient and pervasive tradition that branded the leper as a pariah. It accused him of being immoral, separated him from society, took him as a figure of sin, feared him for the disease he spread and for the terror he inspired.[93]

The leper was shunned as a result of a double taboo--he was feared for his disease and condemned for the evil he symbolized. While disagreeing on details, perhaps, Christian commentators traditionally made the association between leprosy and sin: "They all agreed that leprosy signifies denial of divine law." Thus, when we look at Henryson's Cresseid, we know that the author has made her leprous to symbolize her sin.

But to appreciate the usefulness of tradition even more, let us take the leper and place him in a larger context. In Bruegel's painting, The Battle Between Carnival and Lent, now in the Vienna Kunsthistorisches Museum,[94] we find lepers as simply one type in an extremely complex scene of people engaged in many symbolic activities.[95] In the foreground are two figures engaged in a mock joust--to the left an obese man riding a wine cask and flourishing a spit for a lance and to the right an emaciated combatant proffering two fish at the end of a baker's pole. The lepers are in the train of Carnival, as are another obese and lavishly dressed man and his furred wife, the man playing a stringed instrument, various gamers, musicians, and purveyors of food. In Lent's train are nuns

emerging from a church, as well as the sober images of a mother begging for her sick child and of a triple amputee. A woman pulls a cart of soil (in which a corpse once lay, but which was later painted out[96]) toward Lent's followers.

There are several other curious activities in the scene. A woman is drinking water from a well in the center of the painting, a pig is eating behind the well, and two couples are playing catch with pots, one of which lies in fragments on the ground. People all around the square observe the scene from the windows of houses and an inn or pub (the sign is of a boat on water); one woman is on a ladder, cleaning a window; and there are various fires and firebrands in the scene. The activities are so lively and diverse that one is in danger of overlooking the symbols, as the critic does who says that the "houses are being spring-cleaned."[97]

We know from Brody's study that the lepers would have a moral taint about them to a sixteenth-century viewer of the painting. The lepers are in the train of Carnival, whose obesity is directly contrasted to the thinness of the figure of Lent. Moreover, the stark contrast between the attitudes reflected by the figures in the two trains hints to us that Bruegel does not intend the description solely as a study of the antics at a festival. This much could hardly occur in a single plaza, and the scene is too stylized to be simply photographic. We are urged to look beyond the superficial liveliness to another function for the various figures in the scene.

So far, however, we are equipped only to see a very general conflict between fleshly and spiritual impulses in the scene. On the left

fleshliness, with obesity and eating, and on the right want and spirituality and the Church. In order to see how the scene is filled out with images of the body-soul conflict, that Bruegel knew the conventional images of the body-soul conflict, we must, as Bloomfield insists, investigate the traditions which the artist could draw on. While I am not primarily concerned with Bruegel's artistry, the images which I will present in the next chapter should reveal that one aspect of the painting is the systematic presentation of several body-soul images.[98] The images of the body-soul relationship in Latin and Middle English religious literature should also reveal what traditional images were available for poets of the fourteenth century in England and should allow a richer reading of the Debate Between the Body and the Soul and the stanzaic Morte Arthur.

We have seen that the conflict between the body and the soul, aided by the dominant epistemology of the age and the biblical use of flesh, was employed by medieval writers to abbreviate the moral struggle. We have also seen that while there were statements explaining the methods of biblical exegesis, and while scriptural exegesis was practiced throughout the Middle Ages, and while exegetes did turn to secular literature for spiritual meanings, modern scholars do not agree on the extent to which religious meaning should be seen in secular literature of the Middle Ages. Two criteria for the presence of religious meanings are contextual probability and tradition. In the next two chapters we will see that the conflict between the body and the soul had a series of traditional images which accompanied it and which remained fairly constant throughout the period.

Notes

1. Medieval Cultural Tradition in Dante's Comedy (New York, 1968), p. 14.

2. Ibid., pp. 56-57.

3. Among the things that we do not know about Paul's thought is whether the pneuma, or spirit, which Paul sees in man as well as body and soul, is something only a Christian can have or whether it is found in all men. William Barclay, Flesh and Spirit (Nashville, 1962), p. 14, points out the problem and believes that the spirit is "the Holy Spirit taking up residence in the man."

4. Because it is closest to the text used in the Middle Ages, the translation of the Bible which I will use throughout is the Douai-Rheims version of the Latin Vulgate.

5. There are, of course, many other passages in the Bible and in classical antiquity in which the flesh and spirit are opposed. See J. A. T. Robinson, The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology (London, 1952), pp. 11-33. Important passages from Greek and Roman thought are outlined by Barclay, pp. 10-12: the Orphic tag of soma sema, the body in a tomb; Plato, Phaedrus, 246B, where the soul is the charioteer with the horses of reason and passion, and Phaedo 64A-68C, where Socrates, preparing for death, points to the handicaps imposed on the soul by the body; Seneca, Letters, 92, 110, where the soul is said to be imprisoned in a "detestable habitation"; Virgil, Aeneid, 6, 730-54, where the soul is "clogged by noxious bodies, blunted by earth-born limbs and dying members. . . shut up in the darkness and in a gloomy prison house" (trans. Barclay, p. 12). A writer linking Greek and Judaic thought is Philo, who writes in The Wisdom of Solomon 9, 15, that "the chief cause of ignorance is the flesh and association with the flesh" (trans. Barclay, p. 11). Cf. De Gigantibus, 7; De Migratione, 2; and De Agricultura, 5.

6. D. W. Robertson, Jr., in his Preface to Chaucer (Princeton, 1962), finds in the modern inability to see an inner harmony in all things the basis for seeing discord where there should be none (p. 31). While Robertson would no doubt see the willful disturbance of the divine and natural order as "conflict," he objects to modern criticism which opposes flesh and spirit, which he sees related as inferior to superior. A disruption of the relationship between them is not a conflict between "two mighty opposites" but a rebellion (pp. 22-23). He states that the men of the Middle Ages had not made a "dramatic opposition between the spirit on the one hand and the flesh on the other" (p. 22). On the contrary, "The spiritual and the fleshly could be placed side by side without clashing and without producing any 'tension'" (p. 195).

The overall harmony in the view suggested by Robertson has been challenged by D. R. Howard (in The Three Temptations: Medieval Man in Search of the World (Princeton, 1966), pp. 76-77), who sees "contrarieties" between earthly and otherworldly affections "immanent in medieval literature and thought." And R. E. Kaske has reminded us that while there were hierarchies, there were also significant oppositions, as between heaven and hell. ("Chaucer and Medieval Allegory," ELH, 30 (1963), 187-88. Cited by Howard, p. 28).

7. My interest in epistemology is only in the general way that it leads to the body-soul metaphor. The topic of medieval epistemology is very complex and is treated according to individual figures in Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy, Vol. II: Medieval Philosophy (Westminster, Maryland, 1950), and Eteienne Gilson, History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages (New York, 1955). The important shift in the thirteenth century toward the validity of sense impressions in knowledge acquisition is discussed in these works, and a good brief summary of the leading figures in the late medieval discussion is Meyrick H. Carré, Realists and Nominalists (London, 1946). The use of the body-soul relationship to illustrate the moral struggle is bound to the older tradition of epistemology as it is continued by preachers and writers.

8. In addition to Augustine and Boethius, I have chosen writers chiefly for the frequency of their appearance in late medieval religious literature, relying especially on Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, and Gregory the Great in the second chapter. We should note Dante's letter to a Cardinal saying that law students should study Gregory, Ambrose, Augustine, Dionysius, John of Damascus, and Bede, and Berchorius' lament as well that legists neglect Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and Origen. (Both are noted by Robertson, Preface, p. 313.)

9. St. Aurelius Augustine, Concerning the Teacher and On the Immortality of the Soul, trans. George C. Leckie (New York, 1938); reprinted in Basic Writings of Saint Augustine, ed. Whitney J. Oates, Vol. I (New York, 1948), p. 301.

10. Confessions, in Basic Writings, Vol. I, p. 160.

11. Ibid., p. 156.

12. Ibid., p. 33.

13. Ibid., p. 151.

14. Answer to Skeptics, trans. Denis J. Kavanagh, in Writings of Saint Augustine, The Fathers of the Church, 5 (New York, 1948), p. 219.

15. The Happy Life, trans. Ludwig Schopp, in Writings of Saint Augustine, The Fathers of the Church, 5, p. 81.

16. Trans. Richard Green (Indianapolis, 1962), Book 2, Prose 5, p. 32. Hereafter citations from this translation will be by Book and Prose or Poem in parentheses.

17. Beryl Smalley, The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages, 2nd ed. (New York, 1952), p. 85.

18. The Didascalicon of Hugh of St. Victor, A Medieval Guide to the Arts, trans. Jerome Taylor (New York, 1961), p. 51. Hereafter, in this section, references to this text will be in parentheses.

19. Commentary on the Lord's Sermon on the Mount with Seventeen Related Sermons, trans. Denis J. Kavanagh, The Fathers of the Church, II (New York, 1951), p. 53.

20. Confessions, p. 29.

21. Ibid., pp. 169ff.

22. Ibid., p. 172.

23. Ibid., p. 174.

24. The best study of this tradition is Donald R. Howard, The Three Temptations, cited above.

25. The City of God, in Basic Writings of Saint Augustine, Vol. 2, ed. Whitney J. Oates (New York, 1948), p. 242. The reference is to the Aeneid, 6, 730ff.

26. The heresies related to Manichaeism have been studied by Steven Runciman in The Medieval Manichee (Cambridge, 1960) and by Geo Widengren in Mani and Manichaeism, trans. Charles Kessler (London, 1965). A disagreement exists among historians about the extent to which later medieval dualist heresies can trace their ancestry to earlier ones, with Runciman suggesting that lines of influence can be traced. Emile G. Leonard, "Remarques sur les 'Sectes,'" Ecole-pratique des hautes études, Section des sciences religieuses, Annuaire, 1955-56, (Paris, 1956), and Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans, Heresies of the High Middle Ages (New York and London, 1969), agree that similar impulses probably led to similar solutions at different times, without an influence being necessary. The Dualists had a ready answer to the question, "If God is good, whence comes evil?" (Wakefield and Evans, p. 9), and their answer, using the flesh as inherently evil, was related to the orthodox use of the body-soul conflict as a metaphor of the moral struggle. As Wakefield and Evans write, "The majority of historians today would no doubt agree that the increased piety and spirit of reform operating entirely within the Church had a great deal in common with the piety and moral fervor which led men out of the Church and into heresy" (p. 7).

27. The City of God, pp. 244-45.

28. Cf. Aeneid, 6, 719-21.

29. City of God, p. 239.

30. Galatians 5, 19-20:

> Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envies, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.

31. City of God, p. 240.

32. Ibid., p. 243.

33. Isaac, in Saint Ambrose, Seven Exegetical Works, trans. Michael P. McHugh, The Fathers of the Church, 65 (Washington, 1971), p. 12.

34. W. E. Lynch, "Flesh (In the Bible)," New Catholic Encyclopedia (New York, 1967). Other examples are given as well.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology, p. 19.

38. Ibid., p. 18.

39. Ibid., p. 19. N. I refers to other examples in the Old Testament.

40. Ibid., p. 25.

41. Ibid.

42. The Life and Times of St. Ambrose (Oxford, 1935), 512-13.

43. McHugh, Seven Exegetical Works, p. 145. Hereafter, references in this section will be in parentheses.

44. Romans 7, 14-33.

45. The Christian Combat, trans. Robert P. Russell, in The Writings of Saint Augustine, The Fathers of the Church, 2 (New York, 1947), p. 316. The quotation is from Colossians 2, 11-15.

46. Ibid., p. 321. Cf. I Corinthians 9, 26-27.

47. Confessions, p. 108, Cf. Romans 7, 22-23.

48. Ibid., p. 116.

49. Ibid., p. 126.

50. The sermons I am using are in Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons, trans. Mary Sarah Muldowney (New York, 1959). I will refer to this text in parentheses.

51. Ibid., p. 83. Cf. Galatians 5, 24.

52. He uses David's exclamation in Psalm 26, 6: "I have gone round, and have offered up in his tabernacle a sacrifice of jubilation: I will sing, and recite a psalm to the Lord."

53. The Works of Bonaventure, trans. José de Vinck, Vol. 2, The Breviloquium (Paterson, New Jersey, 1963), p. 93. Hereafter, in this section, references to this text will be in parentheses.

54. Right conscience produces right judgment; synteresis produces right will, "warring against evil and prompting toward good"; actual grace is "knowledge enlightening the intellect so that man may know himself, his God, and the world that was made for him"; and sanctifying grace is charity, the love of God "above all else, and one's neighbor as oneself."

55. De Vinck, p. 116. n.

56. De Vinck, p. 128, n.

57. The other three are "that the eternal Good be preferred to the temporal, the good of virtue to that of utility, [and] the will of God to one's own."

58. An important early study is D. W. Robertson, Jr., "The Doctrine of Charity in Medieval Literary Gardens: A Topical Approach Through Symbolism and Allegory," Speculum, 16 (1951), 24-49, in which he saw the cupidity-charity opposition suggested in descriptions of Grendal's mere, the garden of lovers described in the De Amore of Andreas Capellanus, various gardens in Chrétien's works, the garden in the Roman de la Rose, and the garden in the Merchant's Tale. The issues of biblical exegesis applied to literature were aired in the English Institute Papers of 1958-59, printed in Critical Approaches to Medieval Literature, ed. Dorothy Bethurum (New York, 1960). A recent anthology of papers on typological interpretation of medieval literature is Studies in the Literary Imagination, 3, 1 (Spring, 1975).

59. The pre-Augustinian tradition of biblical exegesis is studied by Jean Danielou in From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers, trans. Wulstan Hibberd (London, 1960); and a summary of early exegesis is found in Walter J. Burchardt, "On Early Christian Exegesis," Theological Studies, 11 (1950), 78-116. Two very important studies of medieval biblical exegesis are Henri Lubac, Exégèse Médiéval: les quatre sens d l'Écriture (Paris, 1959-64), which traces the development from the influence of Origen, Gregory, Cassian, and Eucher of Lyons through Hugh of St. Victor and the

Victorines; and Beryl Smalley, The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages, 2nd ed. (New York, 1952), which stresses the rise in importance of the literal level in the school of St. Victor. A popular account of the "Benedictine centuries" is Jean LeClerq, The Love of Learning and the Desire for God, trans. Catherine Misrahi (New York, 1961).

60. 2 Corinthians 3, 6.

61. On Christian Doctrine, trans D. W. Robertson, Jr. (Indianapolis, 1958), p. 84.

62. De Principiis, 4, 2, 4. Cf. R. E. McNally, "Exegesis, Medieval," in the New Catholic Encyclopedia.

63. Formulae Spiritalis Intelligentiae, quoted by McNally, who also mentions John Cassian's Collationes 8, 3, as a similar statement.

64. Homily 9. Quoted by McNally.

65. "Bible VI, Exegesis, 2. History of Exegesis," New Catholic Encyclopedia.

66. Plato to Alexander Pope: Backgrounds of Modern Criticism, ed. Walter and Vivian Sutton (New York, 1966), p. 115.

67. Ibid., p. 119.

68. The Theory of Medieval Symbolism (Helsingfors, 1960), p. 69.

69. Didascalicon, 6, 5. Cited by Chydenius, pp. 14-15.

70. Rhythmus, PL, 210, 379.

71. De Tribus Diebus, 3. M. D. Chenu, Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West, trans. Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (Chicago, 1968), p. 117.

72. Mimesis, trans. W. R. Trask (Princeton, 1953), p. 40.

73. Ibid., p. 555.

74. Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century, p. 102.

75. Genealogia Deorum, 14, 22, 748. Cited by Richard Hamilton Green, "Dante's 'Allegory of Poets' and the Medieval Theory of Poetic Fiction," Comparative Literature, 9 (1957), 127. A. C. Charity has pointed out Dante's conscious awareness of and use of the method of biblical typology in Events and Their Afterlife: The Dialectics of Christian Typology in the Bible and Dante (Cambridge, 1966).

76. "Patristic Exegesis: The Opposition," in Critical Approaches, p. 24.

77. "Patristic Exegesis: The Defense," in Critical Approaches, pp. 30-31.

78. Alvin A. Lee, "Old English Poetry, Medieval Exegesis and Modern Criticism," Studies in the Literary Imagination, 8, 1 (Spring, 1975), 61. Lee correlates, with qualifications, Frye's literal and descriptive level with the medieval literal and historical, Frye's formal with allegorical, archetypal with tropological, and anagogic with anagogic (47ff.). See Northrup Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton, N. J., 1957), pp. 71-128.

79. Speculum, 46 (1971), 747-50. The Meaning of Courtly Love, ed. F. X. Newman (Albany, N. Y., 1968).

80. MP, 6 (1958), 74ff. Hereafter references to this essay will be in parentheses.

81. Ibid., 79. The author was Eucher of Lyons.

82. Preface, pp. 357-58. See also R. H. Green, "Classical Fable and English Poetry in the Fourteenth Century," Critical Approaches, pp. 110-33. Raymond Carter Sutherland has recently taken up the question and noted that God is the ultimate author of types which a writer copies:

> This brings us to the question of whether types can exist in the works of literary craftsmen since God is their proper author. It would seem that they can by a process of extension and analogy: if God is their ultimate author, that is if the types in literature relate to matters defined by dogma. Of course, this sort of type present in literature must concern itself with things already known, but it must exhibit these things in a manner hinted at or foreshadowed, not baldly nor plainly stated. In this quality it partakes of the nature of the Scriptural type. Analogous with dramatic irony, the reader may know what the fictional characters do not know.

"Theological Notes on the Origin of Types, Shadows of Things to Be," Studies in the Literary Imagination 8, 1 (Spring, 1975), 1.

83. Judson Allen, The Friar as Critic (Nashville, 1971), p. 43.

84. Bernard F. Huppé and D. W. Robertson, Jr., Fruyt and Chaf: Studies in Chaucer's Allegories (Princeton, 1963), p. 24.

85. Augustine discusses symbols with good and evil senses in De Doctrina Christiana, 3, 25:

> This is the situation when the lion is used to signify Christ, when it is said, "The lion of the tribe of Juda. . . has

prevailed" [Apocalypse 5, 5], but also signifies the Devil, when it is written, "Your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour" [Luke 13, 21].

Trans. Robertson, p. 100.

86. Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century, p. 136.

87. Allen, p. 136.

88. "Typology, Paradigm, Metaphor, and Image in the York Creation of Adam and Eve," Drama Survey, 7 (1969), 114.

89. Ibid., 117.

90. The Play Called Corpus Christi (Stanford, 1966), p. 66.

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid., pp. 67, 69. Cf. Matthew 24, 38 and I Peter 3, 20-21.

93. The Disease of the Soul: Leprosy in Medieval Literature (Ithaca, New York, 1974), p. 146.

94. A reproduction is in The Complete Paintings of Bruegel, intro. Robert Hughes, notes Piero Bianconi (New York, 1967), Plates IV-V.

95. C. G. Stridbeck has outlined the topical elements as a confrontation of Lutheranism and Catholicism in "'Combat Between Carnival and Lent' by Pieter Bruegel the Elder: An Allegorical Picture of the Sixteenth Century," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute, 19 (1956), 96-109. Stridbeck provides a brief overview of the critical reaction to the painting. No one, as far as I know, has shown the central conflict, between the flesh and the spirit, as dictating the choice of certain images in the scene.

96. Cf. The Complete Paintings, p. 94.

97. Ibid., p. 93.

98. Cf. the discussions in Chapter II of the husband and wife, horse and rider, fire, water, swine, musical instrument, building, earth, vessel, ladder, knife, and boat. The images of light-darkness and burden are also present. The buildings are all dark on the inside; and the side of the plaza on which the figures of Carnival are arranged is dark, while the sky beyond the plaza is very light. Three figures carry burdens on their backs, not to mention the enormous stomach which one of the figures bears.

CHAPTER II

THE IMAGES OF THE LATIN TRADITION

Conflict between the body and the soul was a common way men of the Middle Ages simplified and dramatized man's moral condition. It had its sources in the patristic adaptations of classical philosophy and in the scriptural use of _flesh_ to name man in his distance from God. While modern scholars are divided on the applicability of the exegetical method to the study of medieval secular literature, there is little serious question about the presence of traditional themes and images in medieval literature or about the need for interpretation which goes beyond the surface narrative. The best test for the presence of meanings which go beyond the narrative level, other than textual probability, is the existence of a tradition in which symbols of those meanings participate.

In this chapter we will see that Latin writers characteristically used certain images as analogues to the body-soul conflict, and in the next chapter we will see that Middle English writers continued to use most of the same images to dramatize the moral conflict. The body-soul images thus exist in traditional patterns in the Middle Ages, and when we find them functioning in literature we can assume that the writer is drawing on the traditions and intends for us to see the same moral conflict which the images usually signified. We will find later that the author of the _Debate Between the Body and the Soul_ is aware of the conventional images and uses them to add resonance to the

central conflict of the poem, and that the author of the stanzaic Morte Arthur, while relating a popular, legendary tale, is also interested in pointing to the moral implications of the action, which he accomplishes with the body-soul images.

When writers of the Middle Ages looked for analogues of the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, they turned to what was familiar to them, presenting the profound by means of the ordinary. They drew their images of moral conflict from nature, from man in his domestic setting, and from man in his larger social arrangements; and in these areas few images appear which would not have been immediately apprehensible to medieval readers and hearers. From inanimate nature medieval writers drew images of the light of the soul and the darkness of the body. Three of the four elements, fire, earth, and water, became images of moral conflict. The fire of bodily passions and the flammability of the flesh; the body as earth, slime, ashes redeemed by Christ, who took on earth; and the body as sodden, watery, with streams of passion leading to the drowning of the soul were popular images. The body as earth was allied to the image of the body as a burden from which the soul strove to ascend for righteousness and truth, and the wateriness of vice similarly was consistent with the image of the soul as sailor and the body as a boat or ship.

From animate, vegetative nature came imagery of the husk and kernel and the body as thorn and nettle irritating the soul. From sensitive nature came the general association of carnality with the animal nature of man, specifically with the images of the lecherous, gluttonous swine and of the horse and rider or horse and charioteer.

The body as horse was rebellious, and the soul was charged with the discipline as well as the care of the headstrong steed. Man himself furnished the images of the inner and outer man. The natural images remained virtually constant throughout the Middle Ages. Traditional images of light-dark, fire, earth, water, burden, ascent, sailor-ship, and inner-outer man are pervasive in the Middle English literature.

The second area from which writers chose images to illustrate the body-soul conflict was the home. The dwelling place itself with openings of windows and doors was a metaphor. Sometimes the dwelling was a cave or a cloister, and in the later Middle Ages the building was generally a castle. Images from life in the home included the vessel, the ladder, and the knife, the last signifying the cutting away of carnality. The body was seen as a musical instrument in an image of domestic entertainment suited to express the harmony between the body and the soul, and the body was the tomb of the soul. All of these images would have been familiar to speakers and hearers alike and were frequently used in religious writings of the Middle Ages.

But two domestic images, also familiar, were given such wide exercise in the Middle Ages as to be unrivalled, except perhaps by the image of the dwelling, by other domestic images as ways of dramatizing the moral conflict between the body and the soul. The first is the imagery of clothing, descriptive of the flesh, the "old man" which must be stripped away, and which Christ redeemed by putting on the clothing of the flesh. The second and of greatest importance is the image of the husband and wife, frequently supplemented by an adulterous relationship between the wife and a lover. The husband and wife and the

adulterous triangle were repeatedly employed by writers to illustrate the relationship of the soul to the body and to Christ. The symbolic use of adultery provided preachers into the late Middle Ages with an exciting and graphic model of the process of sin.

The third area from which familiar images were derived to illustrate the body-soul conflict was the larger social structure and institutions. In the Latin literature images of the judge, of prison, and slavery appear; but while the prison is seen in Middle English literature, the images of the judge and slavery are uncommon. A complex of images from political life which was used throughout the Middle Ages, however, and which provided a series of dramatic presentations of the body-soul struggle consists of images of the kingdom, the king, rebellion, and war. The kingdoms of heaven and of the body were the two lands of the soul, the former of which was the fatherland and the latter the land in which the soul was a pilgrim and in exile. An alternate image of the kingdom was that of the fortified city. The soul was a king ruling over the body, its subject or servant; and to this convention the Middle English writers added a broader feudal lord-subject, lord-servant relationship. In the Latin and Middle English traditions the flesh is a rebellious subject seeking domination, and in both traditions the flesh wars against the soul as it had in Paul's writings.

The first of the images of the body-soul conflict drawn from nature in the Latin tradition is the contrast between light and dark. The light-dark contrast has been common in many cultures and ages,[1] and for medieval writers the light of the soul is darkened by the body. Man's inner light, a gift of God the source of physical and intellectual

light, is dimmed by contact with the flesh, which has been vitiated by original sin.[2] As Odon Lottin has pointed out:

> Parmi les principaux effets du péché originel, les theologians du moyen âge ont rangé l'ignorance et la concupiscence. A leurs yeux, en effet, la raison theorique s'est trouvée enténébrée par l'erreur et l'ignorance, et la raison pratique a perdu son empire sur l'appetit sensitif.[3]

The matter of rule will be taken up later, but here we should note that the darkening effect of error is a common metaphor throughout the Middle Ages. Lady Philosophy, as we have seen, refers to the light of the mind endangered by the "dark cloud of error," and sends Boethius searching for truth to "the light of his inner vision."[4]

The metaphor is applied specifically to the body-soul relationship by Ambrose, who says that the soul knows "that she has been darkened by her union with the body," and that she says in the words of Canticle I, 6, "Look not on me, because I am of a dark complexion, because the sun has not looked upon me."[5] Ambrose then underlines his interpretation: "That is, the passions of the body have attacked me and the allurements of the flesh have given me my color. . . ." Of the man who refrains from pleasures of the body, Ambrose says that "his soul is resplendent like the dawn" of Canticle 6, 9.[6] Augustine at Cassiciacum, according to O'Connell, went through a period of discussing the soul in the body in terms of *tenebrae*.[7] And Gregory in the *Dialogues* explains the stench of Hell as "the delights of the flesh [which] darken the mind they infect, making any clear vision of the true light impossible. By turning to base pleasures, man shrouds his noblest nature in darkness."[8]

In addition to images of light and darkness, the elements, with the exception of air,[9] were also drafted to serve in the explication of the

relationship between the body and the soul. A common image was of fire, particularly the fire of passion, as in the hymn for Sext attributed to Ambrose:

> Exstingue flammas litium
> Aufer calorem noxium,
> Confer salutem corporum,
> Veramque pacem cordium.[10]

Ambrose also explains that without flesh to inflame concupiscence, the vice would be harmless.[11] Prudentius portrays Lust attacking Chastity, the former armed with a torch:

> On her falls Lust the Sodomite, girt with the fire-brands of her country, and thrusts into her face a torch of pinewood blazing murkily with the pitch and burning sulphur, attacking her modest eyes with the flames and seeking to cover them with the foul smoke.[12]

Chastity eventually gets the upper hand and dispatches Lust, who in a dying exhalation, "spews out hot fumes with clots of foul blood, and the unclean breath defiles the air nearby."

Gregory refers to the life of the carnal as "hay and straw" and says that when one is tempted he is "scorched with the torches of carnal desires."[13] A common image of threatening temptation is that of a torch or spark approaching a combustible tinder, man's flesh being assumed to be highly flammable. Gregory tells of a Christian who set aside his wife upon entering the priesthood, and, while he lived with her, kept her at a distance:

> After a long life, forty years of which he spent in the priestly ministry, he was seized with a severe fever and brought to the point of death. When his wife saw him lying there half dead, with all the strength of his body wasted away, she put her ear to his face, trying to catch the least sound of breathing.
>
> Conscious of her presence, he mustered all his strength and with the little breath that was still in him he rasped in a hoarse whisper, "Go away from me,

> woman. The fire is still flickering. Take away the tinder."[14]

Jerome toys with the relationship between the ashes of the body (discussed below) and the spark contained in the flesh, and ends a sermon with a stirring call to renounce the fleshly instincts: "Let us pray the Lord that this tiny flame be always in desert land, lifeless and without water, and with no kindling whatever for vices."[15]

The metaphor of man as earth is a common means of expressing the idea of man as the microcosm of the universe, "the whole world on a minor scale. . .placed in the 'middle' between the material and the spiritual world,"[16] which we will discuss later. But for the moment we need to consider how this image is used to illustrate the base and unstable human condition. Man was created from the slime of the earth (in limo terrae), and medieval writers frequently call upon the sliminess of man's origins as a reminder of his worthless condition apart from God. Tertullian develops the image by saying that man is generated by the slime of sperm (ex seminis limo).[17] Basil, while not using slime, does use the image of mud to describe the overwhelming power of man's earthiness:

> The soul of the sinner and of him who lives according to the flesh and is defiled by the pleasures of the body is wrapped up in the passions of the flesh as in mud; and the enemy, trampling upon this soul, strives to pollute it still more, and, as it were, to bury it, treading upon him who has fallen, and with his feet trampling him into the ground, that is, trampling the life of him who has slipped into his body.[18]

Christ came to redeem man from this wretched condition. Paul writes, "The first man was of the earth, earthly; the second man, from heaven, heavenly."[19] Chrysologus accordingly admonishes us, "Therefore, even as

we have borne the likeness of the earthly, let us bear also the likeness of the heavenly."[20] Augustine says that it is Christ as physician who saves men from their earthiness, applying an "eye-salve" of his own earth: "By dust thou wert blinded, and by dust thou art healed."[21]

With earth expressing man's distance from God went two related notions--that men and their prosperity would deteriorate to dust and ashes in the courses of time and God's providential justice and that man's condition, represented by the body, was odious. There was a common connection between earthiness and dung, and Gregory sees in Job's experience a lesson on the body, with "its corruption and frailness set forth in the dunghill and potsherd."[22] Caesarius of Arles suggests that men should go to the tomb to see "the stinking remains of worms" and the "stinking, horrible dust."[23] Although patristic writers thus pointed to man's transience with the help of odious images, accenting the morbid is the special talent and interest of the later Middle Ages, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Two frequently used corollaries of the earth as a metaphor for man's distance from God were the motifs of the body as burden and its converse, the ascensus mentis in Deum. The opposition was commonly invoked to dramatize the moral struggle:

> The cohabitation of the body and soul in an uncongenial alliance presents a polarity often expressed by the symbolism of terrestrial weight and upward flight, which emphasizes the opposite tendencies of loving and despising the world.[24]

The chief scriptural basis for both concepts is Wisdom 9, 15: "For the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things."

Valerian argues against excesses of appetite and against drunkenness by showing the extra burden which results: "He who loads additional burden upon infirm bodies is preparing a road of weakness. Thus a man burdened by the weight of an excessive pack undertakes and continues a journey with doubtful hope of success."[25] While Valerian is perhaps referring to the physical appetites exclusively, in another homily he is clearly using the image of a burden as a symbol of the larger moral struggle:

> We must cast off whatever burden the unfortunate error of worldliness has placed on our human bodies. Otherwise, this error, by casting a burden of sins in our way, will not let us arrive at those days of remuneration. . . . You will not arrive at the place of the promised inheritance, unless in your pursuit of life you first strip your body of the vices which burden it.[26]

Augustine writes that man's body is, through God's justice, "his heaviest yoke," but that the soul who uses his body wisely will be rewarded at the resurrection by having the body "placed, without burdensomeness, under its control."[27] And there are at least four references in Gregory's Moralia to the weight which the body or which carnal habits impose on the soul.[28]

The flight of the soul from the moral burden and epistemological limits of the body to God is a ubiquitous theme in medieval ascetic thought, and it has been well-researched by modern scholars.[29] The Christian origins of the image are Psalm 54, 7; 138, 9; Isaiah 40, 31; Proverbs 33, 5; and Philippians 3, 20, according to Diekstra, who traces the idea from St. Augustine to Hugh of St. Victor.[30] The motif both is stated and has poetic manifestations throughout the Middle Ages.

A fairly simple way of putting the ascent is Gregory of Nyssa's

statement that the soul should "rise above the pleasures of the body,"[31] or Ambrose's definition of humanity: "A wise man should remove himself from fleshly pleasures, elevate his soul, and draw away from the body; this is to know oneself a man."[32] More vivid images are common, however, as when Ambrose later refers to a soul victorious over physical impulses as "fly[ing] out like a sparrow from a broken snare."[33] Augustine shows how his soul can transcend knowledge bound to sense impressions: "I will soar also beyond this power of mine; for this the horse and mule possess, for they too discern through the body."[34] And he develops the image of flight in the Soliloquies by the addition of the prison image (discussed below) and the darkness and light pattern:

> These things of the senses are to be utterly shunned and the utmost care must be used lest while we bear this body our wings be impeded by their snare; seeing that we need them whole and perfect if we would fly from this darkness to that light, which deigns not even to show itself to those shut up in the cage of the body. . . .[35]

The poetic manifestations of the ascensus mentis are both beautiful and famous. It is significant that Lady Philosophy promises Boethius feathers for his mind (Book IV, Meter I) in the Consolation of Philosophy; we have the flight of the soul in Macrobius' Commentary on the Dream of Scipio; and two later medieval occurrences of the motif are in Alan of Lille's Anticlaudianus[36] and in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, where Troilus' soul at his death at the end of the poem rises to heaven to look back with a smile at the earth.

The weight of the body expressed through earthiness is related to a similar weight expressed by water imagery. St. Methodius states that the benefit of chastity is the ability to make the flesh rise from its soddenness:

> For chastity contributes not a little towards the ready attainment of incorruptibility: it makes the flesh buoyant, raising it up and drying out its moisture and overcoming its sodden weight with a more powerful counteraction.[37]

Water can simply swamp the soul. Ambrose warns that the soul should not be buried "under a double inundation, from the body and from the world."[38] And drowning is the image which Gregory uses to explain the dangers of the fleshly impulse: it "drowns those whom the wing of knowledge had raised on high."[39]

Water indicates the life of the vicious soul who turns to wickedness for Origen:

> It is borne along towards loss of its rationality and to what may perhaps be called a "watery" life, and soon, as its increasing degradation deserves, it puts on the "watery" bodies of evil appropriate to such an irrational creature.[40]

Jerome refers to the "moisture of lust" in a comment on Psalm 119, 83, where a just dryness appears: "I am become like a bottle in the frost: I have not forgotten thy justifications";[41] and the wateriness of viciousness is more specialized in Gregory of Nyssa's treatise On Virginity, where passion becomes a stream from the senses to other organs of sense and to the heart:

> For if one pleasure exists. . . it is like the stream of water from one source which, when it is divided into different streams, spreads to each of the pleasure-loving organs of the senses. Therefore, the one who is weakened by any one of the sensual pleasures damages his heart, as the voice of the Lord teaches, when he says that the one who has fulfilled the desire of his eyes has already received the wound in his heart.[42]

In the Sayings of the Fathers, Abba Hyperidius says that fasting lifts a monk's body "from the depths" and also "dries up the channels down which worldly pleasures flow."[43]

Mary Ursula Vogel has studied the occurrences of the soul as the

sailor and the body as a ship,[44] and the image is at work in Valerian's warning against the unrestrained excess of festivals: "We often observe that sea-going vessels suffer shipwreck when near to port, through some sudden force, when the oars are idle."[45] Jerome, apparently using the image of the stream as well as the image of the sailor and ship or boat, says that the spirit must continually watch and guard against physical impulses: "But if he relaxes for even a moment, even as a man rowing his boat upstream immediately slips back if he relaxes his hands and is carried by the current of the river. . . so also the state of man, if it relaxes for even a moment, gets to know its weakness."[46]

We have seen in light and dark images and in images drawn from three of the four elements symbols of the body-soul relationship, with that relationship understood to indicate man's relationship to God. Vegetation provides two important images for patristic writers.[47] We noted earlier that the body was likened to hay and straw in its flammability, and accordingly Chrysologus compares the body to a field of Grain: "Vices are to the human body what fire is to a dried-up grain field."[48] A more prominent and specific image is of the kernel and the husk, used both for talking about the spiritual and literal senses of Scripture[49] and for referring to the soul and the body. Tertullian, for example, says that the body is the vagina animae, the sheath or husk of the soul.[50]

A more interesting vegetation image of the body, however, is that of the thorn. Gregory interprets the thorns and nettles of Isaiah 34, 13, as sins and evil thoughts;[51] and Chrysologus shows that sin has its roots in the flesh as he outlines the superiority of the New Law to the Old:

> And just as thorns grow the more when they are cut by the sickle, so the passions put forth more sprouts when they are trimmed through the law, since they are internally strengthened because they are implanted, as it were, in a root of flesh.[52]

A locus classicus for this metaphor is Matthew 13, 7-22, where Jesus talks about the word choked by the thorns. Basil interprets the thorns as,

> the pleasures of the flesh and wealth and glory and the cares of life. He who desires the knowledge of God will have to be outside of all these things, and being freed from his passions, thus to receive the knowledge of God.[53]

The association of the thorn with the flesh is also made by Jerome as he praises virginity above marriage: "I gather the rose from the thorn, the gold from the earth, the pearl from the oyster."[54]

We might also note that one of Gregory's stories about St. Benedict gains richness from this image. In this story, the Devil brought a woman to Benedict's thoughts, and Benedict was seized by a violent desire. He struggled in vain to rid himself of the thoughts, until God in his grace made Benedict discover a solution:

> He then noticed a thick patch of nettles and briers next to him. Throwing his garment aside he flung himself into the sharp thorns and stinging nettles. There he rolled and tossed until his whole body was covered with blood. Yet, once he had conquered pleasure through suffering, his torn and bleeding skin served to drain the poison of temptation from his body.[55]

The thorns of physical passion within are conquered by the nettles without.

More common natural images than those of vegetation, however, were animal images. The commonplace observation was that man stood midway between beings with souls and no bodies (God and the angels) and those with bodies and no immortal souls (animals), with man participating in both groups:

> Your soul is made to the image of God, whereas your body is related to the beasts. In one there is the holy seal of imitation of the divine. In the other there is found base association with beasts and wild animals.[56]

Everyone agreed with Aristotle that "the life of animals. . . may be divided into two acts--procreation and feeding,"[57] and with Ovid that the horizontal posture of animals looking always at the earth and the erect posture of man, who can see the stars, said something about the relative capacities of animals and men.[58] Simply put, men should recognize their dignity and not act like beasts, according to Hugh St. Victor:

> What is more foolish than always to look at the lowest things and to hold one's face toward earth? This is the lot of the beasts who are granted to seek nothing higher. But Wisdom dwells in things of heaven, and those unwilling to rise erect and be lifted toward it are like the beasts and gaze at the earth.[59]

What is repeatedly affirmed in the Middle Ages is the folly of forgetting one's divinity within and behaving like the beasts. Basil ends a sermon with an emphatic recollection of the Fall by quoting Psalm 48, 21: "He, because he did not perceive his own dignity but bowed down to the passions of the flesh, 'hath been compared to senseless beasts, and made like to them.'"[60]

The beasts as a group are thus taken as figures of man's bodily passions:

> The beasts of the field and the birds of the air which were brought to Adam are our irrational senses, because beasts and animals represent the diverse emotions of the body.[61]

But it is not easy to see patterns in the choice of single animals to represent carnality. The interpretation of sensual men as beasts is so flexible that it allows virtually any animal to represent carnality.

But two images do emerge as more popular--the pig, or swine, and the horse. After attaching other failings to various animals--avarice to the wolf, anger to the dog, treachery to the fox, anger to the lion, timerity to the deer, stupidity to the ass, inconstancy to the bird--Lady Philosophy says that "the man who is sunk in foul lust is strapped in the pleasures of a filthy sow."[62] The sow here no doubt represents lust in the narrow sense, but a broader reading of piggishness as representative of brutishness in general is found frequently:

> Just as the eyes of pigs are by nature trained on the ground and have no experience of the wonders of the sky, so the soul pulled down by the body can no longer look towards heaven and the beauties on high, being bent towards what is low and brutish in nature.[63]

Marcel Thiebaux has investigated the image of the boar in medieval literature and has found that it uniformly appears as "lecherous, treacherous and diabolical."[64]

The other popular animal image, the body as a horse, is extremely important.[65] In De Libertate Arbitrii Augustine protests that free will is not what animals have, since they must serve the flesh: "For the will of the horse does not subject itself to the appetite of the flesh, but always serves it by necessity."[66] Anyone who is enslaved by his passions, says Basil, is "like an amorous horse which neighs after his neighbor's wife."[67] The image of the soul as the rider and the body as the horse appears in countless literary works and illustrations,[68] apparently because the drama of a headstrong steed controlled only with difficulty was a source of perpetual excitement. In a hymn for periods of fasting, Prudentius, combining images of light and of horsemanship, praises the benefits of fasting in restraining Christians from vice:

> For if, abandoned to excess in food and drink,
> Man does not curb the body by holy fasts,
> The flame of his high spirit burning bright and pure
> Will shrink and pine away, all smothered by delights,
> And the soul will fall asleep within his sluggish breast.
> . . .
> Then let us check desires of flesh with tighter rein
> And keep the light of wisdom bright within our hearts.[61]

Andreas Capellanus warns Walter, the "new recruit of love," that "you do not know how to manage your horse's reins properly."[70] The longer that one thinks about a woman he has fallen for, says Andreas, the more uncontrollable are his impulses--he "cannot hold the reins."[71]

Compounding the problem of the relationship between the horse and the rider is the irony that the soul is supposed to deal with the body charitably. The rider has to provide food for his mount, but in so doing he should not forget the need for disciplining the horse:

> For now besides fodder, he has need of a bridle and spurs; the bridle, indeed, that he may check him when fiery and violent from evil; spurs, however, that he may excite him when slothful to do good.[72]

The danger of rebellion is always present, and one controls the flesh by abstinence and moderation. Ambrose writes that Temperance "tightens the reins placed on the violence of the body by its abstinence from pleasures."[73]

Related to the horse-rider image is that of the charioteer and horse(s), in which the same issue of control is at stake. Chrysostom points out that fulfillment for the flesh comes through the good management of it by the soul as he comments on Romans 8, 6 ("For the wisdom of the flesh is death; but the wisdom of the spirit is life and peace"):

> Whenever the flesh exalts herself, and gets the mastery over her charioteer, she produces ten thousand mischiefs. The virtue of the flesh is her subjection to the soul. As the horse then may be good and nimble, and yet this is not

> shown without a rider; so also the flesh will then show her goodness, when we cut off her prancings.[74]

Augustine also compares the management of the body to the "charioteer [who] feeds and properly manages the horses in his care."[75]

The horse-rider image was not intended to be looked at without reference to larger issues. Both Satan and Christ influence the control which the soul is able to maintain over the body. In the De Patriarchis Ambrose explains Genesis 49, 16-17:

> Dan shall judge his people like another tribe in Israel. Let Dan be a snake in the way, a serpent in the path, that biteth the horse's heels that his rider may fall backward.

The serpent is, of course, the Devil, and Ambrose warns us to beware of him:

> Let us beware that the serpent may not lie hid anywhere in the path and undermine the footstep of the horse--that is, of our body--and suddenly throw the sleeping rider. For if you are vigilant, we ought to be on our guard in some measure and shun the bites of the serpent. . . Should avarice wound your heart, should lust inflame it, you are a sleeping rider, and on that account you are not able to restrain your body, that is, your horse.[76]

Conversely, the soul is not alone in its struggle with the body because Christ is also present. The Word of God mounts the rider himself to enable the soul to control his steed: "For He surely mounts the horseman, because He possesses the soul of every holy man, who possesses his own members aright."[77]

While this aid of Christ is continual, it also happened historically in the Incarnation:

> The Word of God then mounted the rider, when he created for Himself a living Body within the womb of the Virgin. He then mounted the horseman, when, by creating Himself, He brought under the yoke of Divine worship a human soul, possessing power over its own flesh. For the Godhead assumed the flesh, by the intervention of the soul, and

> by this means He held together the whole horseman; because He joined together in Himself, not only that which was ruled, but that also which ruled.

Man is able to control his own carnality because Christ assumed both a human soul and flesh and subdued His flesh.

A very common image of the Middle Ages, of the inner and outer man, does not fit well in the categories of natural or domestic images, though I have included it in the former as an image of rational nature. It provided for many writers, as Gareth Matthews has said that it provided for Augustine, "a connected way of conceiving mental functions and narrating psychological episodes."[78] It also provided a graphic simplification of the moral condition, as in the following advice to bishops to be less extravagant in their feasting and more diligent in their lessons at banquets:

> Who is ignorant of the fact that everyone has an interior and an exterior man. For this reason whenever we invite people to a banquet it is proper for us to read over a divine lesson or strive to say something holy to sustain the soul, just as we arrange the service of food to refresh the body. . . . The man who endeavors both to offer souls divine reading and to give bodies a frugal, moderate banquet feeds both the interior and the exterior man.[79]

Gregory of Nyssa writes that man has a dual nature: "There is the 'outer man' to whom corruption is natural, and the one who is known in accordance with the hidden places of his heart, that is, the one who undergoes a renewal."[80]

It is in its corruptibility that the outer man threatens the inner man--when lust, for example, invites the senses of the flesh, the inner man is in danger. One should encourage his soul to turn to God:

> When for a moment the inner man shows signs of wavering between vice and virtue, say: "Why art thou cast down,

> O my soul, and why art thou disqueted within me? Hope thou in God. . . ."[81]

Hugh of St. Victor likewise uses the inner-outer man image as he comments on the sixth petition of the Lord's prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," by alluding to gluttony and the control of the appetite:

> Then the inner strengthening of the word of God restrains the outer appetite so that the bodily desires may not break the mind fortified by spiritual food, and the lust of the flesh may not triumph.[82]

Inner-outer man images are frequent in pictorial art of the Middle Ages, as in the Death of the Virgin window at Chartres Cathedral, where Christ holds a small girl which represents Mary's soul.[83] The moral overtones are also generally present in death scenes in which the inner man is received either by good or bad angels. In a fifteenth-century illustration of the breaking of the legs of the thieves, a small man is issuing from the mouth of each, the small figure of the man to Christ's right met by good angels, the other inner man by a serpent.[84]

In order to provide analogues of the moral struggle between the body and the soul, medieval writers turned to the natural images of light-dark, fire, earth and burden and ascent, water and sailor-ship, of husk and kernel, thorn, swine, horse and rider, and the inner and the outer man. The second area which provided images was the home with its activities; and patristic writers found useful images in the dwelling place itself, in the vessel, ladder, knife, musical instrument, and tomb. Especially well-developed were the images of clothing and of husband and wife. I will sketch broadly the first few images and then dwell at more length on the images of clothing and husband and wife.

The soul resided in a building for many medieval writers--within

"frail walls,"[85] in a "house,"[86] in a "dwelling place."[87] It could reside simply in a "dwelling," as it does for Prudentius, who plays on the double meaning of sepulchre--the one for the body at death and the body as the tomb for the soul earlier:

> For the body we see here reposing,
> Bereft of its life-giving spirit,
> In the sepulcher stays a brief season,
> Then rejoins its noble companion.
>
> The swift years will soon bring that moment,
> When the soul shall revisit these members.
> And cherish its earlier dwelling,
> Now glowing with life's glad renewal.[88]

Prudentius also calls the soul's dwelling a "bodily lodging built up of sinews, skin, blood, gall, bones."[89]

As a variant of simple dwellings, we find the soul living in the "caves" of the senses as Jacob resided briefly in Charrah: "For one who takes delight in this world and rejoices in bodily pleasures is "subject to the passions of the senses and has his dwelling and lodging in them."[90] The soul can also live in the "cloister" of the body.[91] And, with reference to the Immaculate Conception, the Word "entered the shrine of [Mary's] unbroken flesh," and made "for Himself the holy temple of a body."[92]

A popular way of developing the body-as-dwelling motif was by having the windows represent the senses. The scriptural origin is Jeremiah 9, 21:

> For death is come up through our windows, it is entered into our houses to destroy the children from without, the young men from the streets.

This passage is alluded to frequently, with the warning that we should bar the windows of the senses from intrusive temptations:

> Your eye is your window. If you look at a woman to lust after her, death has entered in; if you listen to the harlot's words, death has entered in; if licentiousness takes hold of your senses, death has gone in.[93]

The five foolish virgins were classic examples of those "who congratulated themselves on their bodily integrity alone, but lost the purity of their souls through the corruption of their five senses."[94] Some writers used doors, portae, instead of windows, fenestrae,[95] but the effect was the same. So common was the image that by the twelfth century, a topic of a strife between the heart and the eyes had developed and was used by preachers and writers with enthusiasm.[96]

The image of the body as a vessel is an image used by Paul twice. In 2 Corinthians 4, he writes, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency may be of the power of God, and not of us," and in 2 Timothy 2, 20-21, he says that vessels of gold and silver are for noble purposes and that men similarly should be of honorable use. The image of the vessel was continued by the Fathers. Lactantius wrote that the body, "formed from an earthly mass is, as it were, the vessel of the [soul], which is drawn from heavenly subtleness."[97] At death the soul leaves the body "just as spilled liquid vanishe[s] when a vase has been broken."[98] The body is "the receptacle," and the "vessel."[99] Allied to this image was the concept of the fragile flesh which lasted for a time and then deteriorated. Jerome writes that in life "we possess that treasure in earthen vessels, and are encased in fragile flesh, or rather in mortal and corruptible flesh."[100] He has Critobulus correctly maintain, "None of the saints can have all virtues as long as he exists in this frail body." Tertullian had referred to the body as the cup of the soul--calix animae--and the small vessel of the soul--vasculum animae."[101]

The images of the ladder and the knife do not symbolize the soul or the body directly, but rather express the degree to which one is leading a carnal or a spiritual life. In the image of the ladder, the first step generally relates to contact with the world. In the patristic period the first step is abstinence and the beginning of rejection of the world. "The first step is fasting, for it is still quite close to earth; we are withdrawing from earth, beginning to ascend; nevertheless, we are still thinking of material things, still preoccupied with the care of the body."[102] The second rung is "the true renouncement of the world and consists in aiming at nothing of this world."[103] In this formulation, the world is something which contributes little to the spiritual life. In the writings of Bonaventure, however, the ladder image became modified, such that even the first rung assists in understanding God:

> Let us place the first of the ascending rungs at the bottom by setting before ourselves the whole material world as a mirror through which we can step up to God, the supreme Craftsman.[104]

While the earth, and man's awareness of it, is still secondary to his understanding of God, the sense knowledge is at least helpful in reflecting the presence of God.

The image of cutting was useful when applied to the interpretation of Colossians 3, 5 as a way of mortifying the body:

> Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, lust, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is the service of idols.

Chrysostom writes that the Christian should make a "living sacrifice" of his body, with the "Holy Spirit as fire and sacrificial knife."[105] With this knife he should cut from his heart "what is superfluous and

and does not belong there." But in addition to this general use of cutting for spiritual refinement, the rite of Circumcision also dictated a more specific use of the image, applied to the body. Hugh of St. Victor explains the propriety of having a rite for males, "because Sacred Scripture is accustomed to signify the soul through the masculine sex but flesh through the feminine, so that it was clearly shown that the exterior circumcision conferred sanctification."[106] Circumcision signifies the cutting of fleshly feelings from the soul. The knife of stone represents Christ, says Hugh, quoting I Corinthians 10, 4: "And the rock was Christ." The dramatic image of cutting, applied to lusts of carnality, had a wide usage, especially in connection with sermons on the Circumcision of Christ.[107]

The image of musician and musical instrument is based on the concept of the soul as the user and the body as that which is used.[108] Ambrose says that the bodily members can be "the tools of wrong and the tools of right," depending on what use the soul puts them to.[109] Gregory underscores the importance of unseen forces, i.e., of the mind and of God, by an analogy to construction:

> Imagine a house under construction, and visualize the lifting of immense weights, and large columns suspended from mighty cranes. Tell me, who is doing this work? Is it the visible body that pulls those massive materials with its hands, or is it the invisible soul that activates the body? For if you take away the power invisibly present in the body, very soon all that visible mass of materials, which you saw moving, comes to a standstill.[110]

In a musical performance of good works, the soul plays "in moderation on the body as if on a musical instrument."[111] Jerome says that the act of prayer is like a musical performance:

> Whenever we lift up pure hands in prayer, without deliberate

distractions and contention, we are playing to the Lord with a ten-stringed instrument, "with ten-stringed instrument and lyre, with melody upon the harp."[112]

Not only is the soul the player and the body the instrument, but the harmony which exists between a soul and body united in virtuous action and submissive to God's will is a major metaphor of the Middle Ages.[113] Basil describes the beautiful resonance that can exist among the divine will, the soul, and the body:

> For it is necessary, first to correct the actions of our body, so that we perform them harmoniously with the divine Word and thus mount up to the contemplation of things intellectual. Perhaps the mind, which seeks things above, is called a psaltery because the structure of this instrument has its resonance from above. The works of the body, therefore, give praise to God as if from below; but the mysteries, which are proclaimed through the mind, have their origin from above, as if the mind was resonant through the Spirit. He, therefore, who observes all the precepts and makes, as it were, harmony and symphony from them, he, I say, plays for God on a ten-stringed psaltery, because there are ten principal precepts, written according to the first teaching of the law.[114]

The use of wind instruments is not so common, though in this image the soul is analogous to air and the body to pipes.[115]

Prudentius compared the sepulcher of the dead body to the sepulcher for the soul, the body itself (see above, p. 81), and the body as a tomb is a popular image of the earlier Middle Ages. The soul in the body compared to a body in a tomb is largely of Greek origin, but it was taken over by Christianity. Plato records that Socrates observed, "Some say that the body is the grave of the soul which may be thought to be buried in the present life,"[116] and the idea seems to appear in the New Testament in Matthew 23, 27:

> Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you are like to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness.

A similar conception of death in life is in I Timothy 5, 6: "For she that liveth in pleasures is dead while she is living."

Caesarius draws these two passages together to discuss those who live lives of sin:

> You go along happy, carefree, and proud, thinking that you are living while the soul in your body is--I will not say dead--but buried. "The soul which gives itself up to pleasures," says the Apostle, "is dead while it is still alive."
>
> See what you have come to, most wretched and pitiable soul. You have made a tomb of yourself, as the Lord says in the Gospel: "Whited sepulchres outwardly, but within full of dead men's bones."[117]

The author also quotes Psalm 5, 11, "Their throat is an open sepulchre," to further substantiate his contention that those who live for the pleasures of the body are dead in life.[118]

A very pervasive domestic image of the moral struggle seen through the conflict between the body and the soul in the Middle Ages is of clothing. The image receives much use from a variety of writers, and it has four principal manifestations. The flesh is seen as clothing; there is the consequent need to "strip off the old man"; Christ is the new man, who puts on the flesh; and men are now encouraged to leave their carnal ways and to put on the wedding garments.

The body as clothing was a metaphor used from the earliest Fathers. Origen saw the propriety in Adam and Eve sewing skins into clothing after their sin:

> For it was right that the sinner should put on such garments, of skins of beasts, which symbolized the mortality which he had received as a result of his sin, and of the frailty which resulted from the corruption of the flesh.[119]

Lactantius wrote that the soul at death "has cast off its fragile garment."[120] Ambrose ponders whether man is really soul, body, or a

combination of both, and concludes that the real identity is found in the soul: "We are one thing, our possessions are something else; he who is clothed is one person, his clothing something else.[121] One should, as a result of understanding that he is primarily a soul, transcend his body:

> Therefore know yourself and the beauty of your nature, and go forth as if your foot had been freed of bonds and were visible in its bare step, so that you may not feel the fleshly coverings, that the bonds of the body may not entangle the footstep of your mind. . . .[122]

In the episode concerning God's command to Moses to remove his sandles, Ambrose sees the spiritual significance as the renunciation of the flesh, so that,

> When [Moses] was about to call the people to the kingdom of God he might first put aside the garments of the flesh and might walk with his spirit and the footstep of his mind naked.[123]

Since our bodies are only clothing for the soul, we should not fear death any more than we should fear him who would steal our clothing.[124] Gregory calls the body the clothing of the soul twice in the Moralia;[125] and in the Dialogues he discusses the three kinds of animate beings in terms of fleshly clothing--"one that is not clothed with flesh; another that is clothed with flesh but does not die with the flesh; and a third which is clothed with the flesh and perishes with it."[126]

With clothing suggesting carnality, medieval writers saw in Colossians 3, 9, "Stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds. . .," a natural extension of the metaphor. One should remove his sins, suggested by the exterior man, to achieve a spiritual nakedness with which to be clothed by Christ. Accordingly, adornment of the body was anathema--the soul was burdened with a double covering:

> Seek nothing with exterior gold and bodily adornment; but

> consider the garment as one worthy to adorn him who is according to the image of his Creator, as the Apostle says: "Stripping off the old man, and putting on the new, one that is being renewed unto perfect knowledge according to the image of his Creator." And he who has put on "the heart of mercy, kindness, humility, patience, and meekness," is clothed within and has adorned the inner man.[127]

The virtuous actions of the soul become then a "most magnificent garment for the soul." Augustine also uses the image of the old man in his discussion of temperance in The Catholic Way. Since the old man means Adam and sinful man, and the new man means Christ, we should "strip off the old man and put on the new."[128] Stripping off the old man and putting on Christ becomes "the whole work of temperance."

The third type of clothing image--Christ putting on the robe of the flesh--can be seen in the interpretations of the types of Christ in the Old Testament. Joseph's experience prefigured Christ's:

> His brothers robbed Joseph of his outside coat that was of diverse colors; the Jews stripped Christ of his bodily tunic at His death on the cross. When Joseph was deprived of his tunic he was thrown into a cistern, that is, into a pit; after Christ was despoiled of human flesh, He descended into hell.[129]

Just as Aaron put on the vestments of a high priest over his own clothing to offer sacrifices for the Israelites, so Christ took the flesh:

> So the Lord "in the beginning was the Word. . . ."; but when the Father willed that ransoms should be given for all and grace bestowed on all, then indeed, just as Aaron put on his robe, so the Word took earthly flesh, having Mary for the mother of his body, to correspond to the virgin soil [from which Adam was made]; so that as high-priest, himself having an offering, he might offer himself to the Father to cleanse us all from sins.[130]

Even the conception itself was imagined as an enrobing, as we are shown the most sacred moment in the Virgin's womb:

> The blood was still, and the flesh astonished; her members were put at rest, and her entire womb was quiescent during

> the visit of the Heavenly One, until the Author of the flesh could take on His garment of flesh, and until He, who was not merely to restore the earth to man but also to give him heaven, could become a Heavenly Man.[131]

Both in prefiguration and in the conception, Christ is seen putting on an earthly clothing, the flesh which has been corrupted by Adam and which he must cleanse.[132] Christians are enjoined by Christ's sacrifice in turn to put on the robe of Christ:

> Put on the robe of sanctity, gird yourself with the belt of chastity. Let Christ be the covering of your head. Let the cross remain as the helmet on your forehead. Cover your breast with the mystery of heavenly perfume. Take up the sword of the spirit.[133]

Confessing Christians in fact are the garment of Christ: "We are the robe of Christ; when we have clothed him with our confession of faith, we, in turn, have put on Christ."[134] Another way in which the image of being clothed functions, however, is in the preparation for Christ's return and wedding. The two scriptural passages which demand readiness are Matthew 22, 12-13 and Luke 12, 35-36. The latter, for example, "Let your loins be girt, and lamps burning in your hands. And you yourselves like to men who wait for their Lord when he shall return from the wedding," suggests to Chrysologus that "He who drops off the girdle of virtue cannot overcome the vices of the body."[135]

In the former passage, a king approaches a man who comes to the wedding feast without a wedding garment on.

> And [the king] saith to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The wedding garments are interpreted by Caesarius as restraint of the body and as good works, for which eternal life is the reward:

> Truly, as the pleasure-loving flesh is adorned for a short time with earthly ornaments so that it may please carnal eyes to its own ruin or that of others who are filled with lust, so a holy soul is adorned by divine words as with the spiritual and eternal pearls of good works. Thus happily adorned, it may attain to the company of its heavenly spouse and the nuptial banquet.[136]

When one does mourn his sinful condition, and mortifies his flesh "with hardships and toils," according to Basil,

> By such a person, the mourning garment, which he put on when bewailing his sin, is rent, and the tunic of joy is placed around him and the cloak of salvation, those bright wedding garments, with which, if one is adorned, he will not be cast out from the bridal chamber.[137]

By disciplining the flesh and the soul, the believer can expect a garment not of mourning but of joy in the next life.

From the image of the clothing of flesh, the old man which should be stripped away, to the redemption of man by Christ's clothing Himself in the flesh, to man's waiting for Christ in the wedding garments of virtuous actions, clothing imagery was a valuable, flexible image. Nevertheless, there was another domestic image which was even more widely and dramatically used throughout the Middle Ages. The image of husband-wife is extremely important as a way in which medieval men viewed their moral condition, and it is one of the most elaborately developed images expressing the soul's relationship to the body and to Christ.

As we have seen in Bonaventure's thought, "Every personal sin is in a way a copy of the first and original sin";[138] so it was natural for the relationship between Adam and Eve to be used as an analogy to the relationship between the soul and the body and to the process of sin. In the process of the Fall, suggestion, delectation, and consent proceeded from the serpent, through Eve, to Adam; and this thought can be

found in Augustine, Gregory, and Bede, as well as in other writers.[139] Bonaventure found the three steps in the process of sin in the man, the woman, and the serpent. When men sin the masculine, rational principle does not control the feminine, sensual principle:

> If in sensual delight reason succumbs to sensuality, then the feminine principle is bowing to the serpent. . . and it [i.e., the sin] is imputable not only to the woman but also the man, who should have restrained her and prevented her from obeying the serpent.[140]

Consequently, the body and the soul, viewed as the wife and her husband, became a convenient shorthand to explain the moral life of Christians. Jerome quotes Origen:

> We may say that the soul loves and cherishes the flesh that shall see the salvation of God and cherishes it, schooling it with disciplines, feeding it with heavenly bread, and bathing it in the blood of Christ, so that refreshed and refined it can follow its husband with unfettered step and not be burdened and weighed down by any weakness.[141]

Although the soul is seen as masculine in its relationship with the flesh, it can also be feminine as the spouse of Christ. The Sacrament of Matrimony indicates not only the soul-body relationship, but also the soul-Christ relationship; and it was instituted in Eden:

> Matrimony was a sacrament of a kind of spiritual society which was through love between God and the soul, and in this society the soul was the bride and God was the bridegroom.[142]

Moreover, the soul as the spouse of Christ had an extension as The Church as the Bride of Christ.[143] The marriage scene of Christ and the Church was pictured as both grand and beautiful, as in Thecla's Hymn, which ends "with an exultant song of joy, in which the Virgin and choir is pictured as escorting the King and Queen in a mystical marriage procession toward the Gates of Life."[144]

The soul and the flesh, and the soul and God, and Christ and the

Church were often discussed with related images, and frequently the imagery was erotic,[145] derived from the Canticle of Canticles. Such is the case in Ambrose's Isaac, in which the meeting of Isaac and Rebecca is glossed with passages from the Canticle as the meeting of the soul and Christ and of the Church and Christ:

> Therefore the Church is beautiful for she has acquired sons from hostile nations. But this passage can be interpreted in reference to the soul, which subdues the bodily passions, turns them to the service of the virtues, and makes resistant feelings subject to itself. And so the soul of the patriarch Isaac, seeing the mystery of Christ, seeing Rebecca coming with the people of the nations, and marvelling at the beauty of the Word and of His sacraments, says, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth."[146]

Rebecca in turn desires to kiss Isaac, and Ambrose explains that the desire for kisses springs from the waiting of the Church for Christ and of the soul for Christ:

> Think upon the Church, in suspense over many ages at the coming of the Lord, long promised her through the prophets. And think upon the soul, lifting herself up from the body and rejecting indulgence and fleshly delights and pleasures, and laying aside as well her concern for worldly vanities. For a long time now she has desired to be infused with God's presence and has desired, too, the grace of the Word of salvation, and has wasted away, because he is coming late, and has been struck down, wounded with love as it were, since she cannot endure his delays. Turning to the Father, she asks that He send to her God the Word, and giving the reason why she is so impatient, she says, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth."

The soul derives knowledge from the kisses of Christ, and with the reception of this knowledge, the soul is ecstatic: "I opened my mouth and panted."

The kiss of Christ is analogous to the kiss of a lover: "Through such a kiss the soul cleaves to God the Word, and through the kiss the spirit of Him who kisses is poured into the soul, just as those who

kiss are not satisfied to touch lightly with their lips but appear to be pouring their spirit into each other."[147] With the kiss, Christ "Laid bare his breasts to her, that is, his teachings and the laws of the wisdom that is within."

In the Canticle the King brings the Shulamite to his inner chambers (I, 4), and Ambrose develops the moment by a spiritual interpretation:

> Indeed, "The King brought me to his inner apartment." Blessed the soul that enters the inner chambers. For rising up from the body, she becomes more distant from all, and she searches and seeks within herself, if in any way she can pursue the divine.[148]

As Ruth Cline has shown, the erotic imagery even extended to the bed itself among Christian writers.[149] She reminds us that Origen saw the human body as Christ's bed,[150] and that Fortunatus uses a similar image:

> Templa creatoris sunt membra puellae
> Et habitat proprius tale cubile Deus.[151]

A twelfth-century hymn reflects the same image:

> Iesum quaeram in lectulo
> clauso cordis cubiculo
> privatim in populo
> quaram amore sedulo.[152]

The husband-wife imagery thus proceeds to the very furnishing of the bridal chambers, with Christ and the soul united in the bed of man's body.

With the husband-wife relationship reflecting man's relationship with God, it is not unusual or unexpected that adultery should become a graphic way of representing sin. D. W. Robertson, Jr., has pointed out the pervasiveness of the marriage metaphor in describing social relationships, such as between a bishop and the souls in his care, or between a political leader and his kingdom, and conversely of adultery as a metaphor for the disruption of hierarchies.[153] One such disruption

is the process of sin. "When the sensuality or the lower reason rebels, the result is conventionally termed 'adultery.'" Robertson mentions Berchorius's dictum that adultery, in this sense, includes all mortal sins.[154]

In the City of God Augustine says that while "lust" (concupiscence) is normally the word for the generative impulse, the same word is also "the generic word for all desires."[155] Augustine similarly uses "fornication" in such a broad sense and explains the usage in the Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount:

> Therefore, by the name of such adulterers as are mentioned under this head we are to understand every kind of carnal and lustful concupiscence. Indeed, since the Scriptures so consistently give to idolatry the name of fornication, and since the Apostle Paul calls avarice idolatry, who can doubt that every evil concupiscence may be rightly called fornication? For when the soul disregards the higher law by which it is governed, and prostitutes itself as though for a price, then it corrupts itself through base delight in lower natures.[156]

Later he argues that fornication, idolatry, and covetousness are all related in their lack of righteousness:

> If unbelief is fornication, and if idolatry is unbelief, and if covetousness is idolatry, then there can be no doubt that covetousness is fornication. Now if covetousness is fornication, how can anyone rightly dissociate any kind of sinful lusts from the category of fornication? . . . We are compelled to understand this fornication as generic and all-embracing.[157]

Augustine makes another inclusion of all sin under the heading of fornication when he says that fornication includes "every transgression of the Law through sinful desire."[158]

The metaphor of adultery for sin is used by Methodius in his Symposium, where the soul loses its "unsurpassed loveliness" by being seduced by the Devil:

> It is for this reason that the spirits of wickedness become

> enamored of it and lie in wait for it: they would force it to defile that godlike and lovely image which it possesses.[159]

Methodius offers a tropological analysis of Jeremiah's reproach of Jerusalem:

> Thus, too, the prophet Jeremias tells us, in reproaching Jerusalem: "Thou hadst a harlot's forehead, thou wouldst not blush before thy lovers," where he is speaking of Jerusalem as having submitted herself to the enemy forces for her profanation. Her "lovers," understand, are the devil and his angels, who scheme to dirty and defile, by their sinful contact, the spiritual and translucent beauty of our minds, and lust to commit adultery with every soul that is espoused to the Lord.

Basil writes that one's whole conduct should be virginal, because, "It is possible to commit fornication in speech, to be guilty of adultery through the eye, to be corrupted through the hearing, to receive defilement into the heart. . . ."[160]

Caesarius writes that Christ's passion enables Him to rebuff the Devil: "The very flesh which you had made subject to sin through your seduction has now conquered you by My justice."[161] In another place, Caesarius comments on Joshua's sending spies to Jericho who were received by a prostitute:

> That harlot, dearly beloved, prefigured the Church which had been wont to commit fornication with many idols before the advent of Jesus.[162]

Applied to the individual soul, the same incident proves, "The soul of each one of us was the harlot as long as she lived in passion and the desires of the flesh." Ambrose uses a vivid image when he says that in the stream from Christ's wisdom, man cleanses his image "that had been smeared by the harlot's rouge of worldly pleasure."[163] Gregory compares spiritual adultery with carnal adultery,[164] and he also says that "to delight outwardly in forbidden objects is to commit fornication within."[165]

Adultery and the triangle of husband-wife-lover thus provided a vivid picture of the moral struggle in the Middle Ages. In his On the Gospel of John Augustine gives a detailed interpretation of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman beside Jacob's Well.[166] Christ tells her to call her husband, and Augustine considers this command:

> Let us hear and understand what it is that the Lord says to the woman, "Call thy husband." For it may be that He is saying also to our soul, "Call thy husband."[167]

Christ asks her to call her husband, and the Christian to call his husband, because the "soul without the understanding" is the woman without a husband. That the woman is not living with her lawful husband suggests that only the soul which submits to Christ has understanding. The Samaritan woman, as Christ reveals, is not living with a husband, but with a lover in adultery. "She was living with some man, not a lawful husband, rather a paramour than a husband." In addition she has had five husbands.

The five husbands that the wife has had are the senses of the flesh. While the senses are God's gifts and good, the soul should not be ruled by them throughout life:

> The soul is still weak while ruled by these five husbands, and living under these five husbands; but when she comes to years of exercising reason, if she is taken in hand by the noble discipline and teaching of wisdom, these five men are succeeded in their rule by no other than the true and lawful husband, and one better than they.

The Samaritan woman has thus had the rule of the senses, but she has not allowed the "lawful husband," or Christ, to become her husband:

> Wherefore, after these five senses was that woman still wandering, and error was tossing her to and fro. And this error was not a lawful husband, but a paramour.[168]

The soul which does not submit to Christ is thus engaged with a lover in

adultery.[169]

The husband-wife image was used enthusiastically throughout the Middle Ages, and it seems to have been popular with preachers in the Middle English period. Among the domestic images of the dwelling place, vessel, ladder, knife, musical instrument, tomb, and clothing it is the most important; and it is one of the most prominent body-soul images of any kind in the period.

In addition to natural images and domestic images, the larger social institutions provided images for the body-soul conflict. In a sense one should expect the social structure to mirror the moral condition for writers, because the moral code is frequently seen as a legal matter. Gregory said, for example, that the senses should be checked in such situations in which they might bring information about what it is unlawful to desire.[170] Moreover, in the microcosm-macrocosm analogy, as Allers has shown, man himself reflects the universal laws:

> If human nature is envisioned in such a manner, man is not simply subjected to the universal laws, because he is part of the universe, but he is himself, as it were, these laws, and he may become aware of them by looking into himself.[171]

If one then has the laws within himself, justice consists in maintaining God's just plan in himself.

Speakers and writers did use man in his legal relations to indicate the body-soul condition, and traditions developed of the soul as judge, of the body as prison, and of the soul in slavery to the body. Additionally, a group of related images were given considerable attention in discussing the body-soul association. The images of kingdom, king, rebellion, and war gave writers a full way of describing the moral condition and the process of sin. This group of images is the public

equivalent in importance and drama of the domestic relationship between the husband and wife.

The first public image, of judge, springs directly from man as microcosm, containing within himself the laws of right behavior. Accordingly, the just man is the man who knows the proper places of the soul and the body:

> A man who desires to observe justice should begin with himself and observe it first in himself, growing accustomed to being a just judge between his soul and his body.[172]

Gregory uses the combined images of inner-outer man and judge to suggest the proper keeping of order:

> When it is necessary for our inward man to preside, as a kind of impartial arbiter between itself, and him whom it bears without.[173]

Augustine uses a similar image of the inner man as a "president and judge" to whom the senses as messengers bring evidence of God.[174] And it is the mind rather than the flesh which judges, according to Ambrose:

> Now sagacity, or reason that has control over passion, is better than passion, and what judges is more excellent than what is subject to judgment.[175]

The image of the soul as judge is, oddly enough, unrelated to the more important image of the body as prison, and the two images are usually kept apart. The latter has its origins among the Orphics who "regarded the soul as celestial in nature, as a spark of Dionysius imprisoned in an evil body."[176] Plato recorded two discussions of the metaphor--in the Phaedo (62b) and the Cratylus (400c). Courcelle has examined the tradition in antiquity and in Christian usage,[177] and notes that the metaphor narrowed in application. In the Greek tradition, "La prison de l'âme est soit le corps, les plaisirs sensuels ou les

passions, soit le monde matériel ou les biens de Fortune, soit les Enfers," while in the Christian usage "les auteurs ecclésiastiques l'entendent uniquement au sens moral et ascétique."[178] Basil and Ambrose combine the image of clothing with the prison to talk about the flesh. For Ambrose the happy man is the one who "has cast aside the trapping of his flesh and has freed himself from his prison of the body."[179] And Basil adds the image of the burden:

> Why do you fatten and cover yourself with flesh? Or do you not know that the more massive you make your flesh, the deeper is the prison you are preparing for your soul?[180]

Augustine says that the body is not a prison by God's creation but by way of punishment,[181] and Boethius says that the soul at death is released from "this earthly prison."[182] Prudentius refers to "the prison-house of the body,"[183] says that the soul "is captive in the chains of its prison terrestrial,"[184] and that it is alive in the "dark prison-house of the heart."[185] Gregory argues that carnal men are "bound in prison where they are unable to speak that which their mind prompts them."[186] And Pope Innocent III in the De Miseria Humane Conditionis addresses himself to the question "Why the Body is Called the Prison of the Soul."[187] He quotes first Romans 7, 24 and then Psalm 141, 8:

> "Unhappy man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" Surely he does not want to be let out of prison who does not want to leave his body, for the body is the soul's prison. Of this the psalmist speaks: "Bring my soul out of prison." Nowhere is there rest and quiet, no where peace and security; everywhere is fear and trembling, toil and trouble. The flesh is troubled during life, and the soul will bemourn itself.[188]

A third social image of the relationship between the soul and the body is the image of slavery. There are two ways in which the notion of

slavery is used of the limitations of the soul caused by the flesh. Slavery to the body is first a handicap of the soul imposed by God as a just punishment for Adam's sin; and secondly, slavery is the result of carnality which man imposes on himself. In the first of these two kinds of slavery, the will is aware of its condition and regrets it and wishes to escape it, but in the latter case the slavery results from the folly of the soul. The former kind of slavery is that of the dying soul which sees in death freedom, as when St. Lawrence "escaped with joy from carnal chains."[189] It is this kind of servitude which Dante speaks of when he says that the Exodus represents the departure of a good soul "from the slavery of this corruption to the liberty of everlasting glory."[190]

The other kind of slavery is that to which the soul voluntarily and foolishly submits when it "permit[s] its reason to be enslaved by its passions."[191] Boethius is considering this kind of slavery when he discusses the loss of freedom for men by virtue of having bodies and a compounded slavery when men turn to vice:

> For when they turn away their eyes from the light of supreme truth to mean and dark things, they are blinded by a cloud of ignorance and obsessed by vicious passions. By yielding and consenting to these passions, they worsen the slavery to which they have brought themsleves and are, as it were, captives of their own freedom.[192]

The only escape from such slavery is to turn to God: one thus, according to Gregory of Nyssa, "emerge[s] from the slavery of his passions and his carelessness."[193]

The body-soul conflict achieves some of its highest drama when it is cast in one of the governmental images. The two kingdoms, and the concepts of exile and pilgrimage, gave readers an idea of the largeness in the implications of moral choice; and the images of king,

rebellion, and war were powerful analogues to the flesh-spirit struggle and the turbulent nature of man's moral condition.

The first image asserts that the soul has two kingdoms in which it resides--the fatherland of heaven to which it will return, and the body. Of first importance are the sixteen places in Scripture where Christ referred to the "kingdom" of heaven.[194] The metaphor occurs among other writings of the New Testament seven times.[195] In the Timaeus (42-44) Plato says that virtuous souls will return to their native stars, and Macrobius concludes his Commentary on the Dream of Scipio by quoting Africanus' injunction to good conduct:

> The noblest efforts are in behalf of your native country, a soul thus stimulated and engaged will speed hither to its destination and abode without delay; and this flight will be even swifter if the soul, while it is still shut up in the body, will rise above it, and in contemplation of what is beyond, detach itself as much as possible from the body.[196]

In this life, the soul resides in the land of the body; but Caesarius says that the command to Abraham to leave his country (Genesis 12, 1) should be followed in spirit by us:

> Our land is our body; we go forth properly from our land if we abandon our carnal habits and follow the footsteps of Christ. Does not a man seem to you happily to leave his land, that is, himself, if from being proud he becomes humble, from irascible patient, from dissolute chaste, from avaricious generous, from envious kind, from cruel gentle? Truly brethren, one who is changed thus out of love for God happily leaves his own land.[197]

Before baptism the body is "the land of the dying," and after baptism it is the "land of the living." If we turn to heaven now and leave the vices of the earthly land, we will be rewarded with eternal life: "It is certain that then we will come with joy to the land which God shows us, if with his help we first repel sins and vices from our land, that is, from our body."

Another event in the Bible which was a type for the evils of the carnal life seen through the image of the kingdom was the experience of the children of Israel in Egypt. Egypt to Hugh of St. Victor represented the sinful life,[198] and to Dante, "the conversion of the soul from the sorrow and misery of sin to a state of grace."[199] Egypt can also represent the flesh, and we submit to the tyranny of the flesh when we do not submit to God's rule:

> If, with God's help, we live piously and justly, thinking about chastity, mercy, repentance, and other things similar to these, we are guided by Christ the king even if we are still in Egypt, that is in the flesh. When he rules us He does not employ us in clay and brick, He does not ruin and afflict us with worldly cares or excessive solicitude. However, if our soul begins to turn away from God and to pursue what is shameful and dishonorable, then by rejecting Christ our king "the wisdom of the flesh" which "is hostile to God" subjects our unhappy necks to the tyrant.[200]

The results are bodily pleasures and vices which spell destruction for the soul. Killing of the male children and letting the female children live correspond to killing the reason and encouraging concupiscence.

Augustine also refers to the fatherland of the soul,[201] and he presents a vision of heavenly peace residing in men when they keep their baser impulses under control:

> Those who calm their passions and subject them to reason, that is, subject them to mind and spirit, and who keep their carnal lusts under control--those engender peace within themselves and become a kingdom of God.[202]

The peace results in an orderly soul in which "everything in man which is common to us and to the beasts" is ruled by reason. In this kingdom the Devil cannot live: he "has been cast out of a thoroughly pacified and orderly kingdom of this kind."

As Ernst Stadter has shown, the metaphor of the soul as a kingdom

continued in the theological discussions from Bonaventure to Duns Scotus.[203] The metaphor had a variant in the soul or body as a fortified city or a city-state. We are reminded of the sancta urbs in the Psychomachia (l. 753) assaulted by the vices, and of the two cities of Augustine.[204] In the Confessions as well, Augustine points to the "chaste city of Thine, our Mother which is above."[205] James F. Doubleday has found several references to the image, including the one in the Psychomachia, and finds in Gregory's Moralia an analysis of Job as a city which "is attacked by its enemy in two ways: by external plagues, . . . and by the baneful counsels of his wife."[206]

Two other images are related to the image of the kingdom--the soul in exile and the soul as a pilgrim. The former is seen in Gregory's Dialogues, Book IV, when Gregory talks of the fruits of Adam's fall, the first of which was loss of illumination of the mind:

> Born as we are of his flesh into the darkness of this exile, we hear, of course, that there is a heavenly country, that angels are its citizens, and that the spirits of the just live in company with them; but being carnal men without any experimental knowledge of the invisible, we wonder about the existence of anything we cannot see without bodily eyes.[207]

Augustine had similarly written that "After his sin, man was driven from paradise into exile."[208] The soul as a pilgrim has its origin in Psalm 119, 5, 6: "Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged! I have dwelt with the inhabitants of Cedar; my soul hath been long a sojourner." Diekstra has found several examples of the soul as a pilgrim in the body. In addition to the example in the Psalms, he cites 2 Corinthians 5, 6: "While we are in the body, we are absent [peregrinamur] from God," and examples among the Christian commentators.[209]

Consistent with the image of the body as the earthly country of

the soul is the conception of the soul as a ruler. In the late Middle Ages the will is the king and the understanding is the lawgiver,[210] and this presentation has its precedents in the earliest Christian writers. Tertullian said that the soul ruled from its seat in the heart,[211] and Ambrose believed that at man's creation, God "established the royal rule of the mind over man's emotions, so that all his feelings and emotions would be governed by its strength and power."[212] Augustine wrote that philosophers approach the truth when they assert that man's mind and reason rule the emotions. This part of the soul "is posted as it were in a kind of citadel to give rule to these other parts, so that while it rules and they serve, man's righteousness is preserved without a breach."[213] Similarly Alcuin held that "over these two--appetite and passion--reason must reign, being the special characteristic of the mind."[214]

When the simplification of the body-soul metaphor was applied, the soul became the ruler of the body:

> Each man exercises the care of himself by a kind of royal power if he checks the excesses of the body in himself and reduces his flesh to servitude.[215]

In discussing the reference to the "kings of the earth" in Psalm 75, 13, Jerome said that anyone could be a king:

> God may permit us also to be kings of the earth, . . . in order to rule over our own flesh. . . . Let us beg God to make us kings that we may rule over our flesh that it be subject to us.[216]

The king-subject analogy is also seen in Hugh's De Sacramentis: God intended that the soul should rule the body, "through reason, and that in man himself sense might be subject to reason."[217]

Opposed to the soul as the king is the body as rebellious subject. The flesh is in a constant state of potential rebellion, as a result of

the disobedience of the soul at the Fall: "The spirit refused to submit to its creator, and lost its right over its subject."[218] Before the Fall, the flesh was obedient: "Not yet did the flesh by its disobedience testify against the disobedience of man."[219] The vigilance necessary to keep the body in subjection can be seen even today in the mortification of the flesh practiced three times a week by the Franciscans.[220] The Capuchins practice the discipline three times a week and daily during Holy Week, "in order that the body may not rebel against the spirit, but be in all things subject to it, and in memory of the bitter Passion."[221] The cost of failing to subject the body to the soul is that the soul loses its dominance and a new king is set up: "If the movements of sensuality dominates the movement of the mind, it dominates also the movement of the body which is subject to it, and then sin begins to reign in our mortal body."[222]

We come now to the most dramatic embodiment of the conflict between the body and the soul, as the stage is set for warfare by the rebellious nature of the flesh. Ambrose wrote that the mind "endures a grievous strife with the body of death."[223] Augustine claimed to "carry on a daily war by fasting, oftentimes bringing my body into subjection."[224] And Prudentius summarizes the entire Psychomachia by referring to the continuing civil war within man:

> We know that in the darkness of our heart conflicting affections fight hard in successive combats. . . . Savage war rages hotly, rages within our bones, and man's two-sided nature is in an uproar of rebellion; for the flesh that was formed of clay bears down the spirit. . . .[225]

While the conflict is one of rebellion, the fact that it is a rebellion is frequently lost sight of, as a conflict between two rather equal forces is the way the battle is presented. Citing Paul's lament in Romans 7, 23-24, "I see another law in my members fighting against

the law of my mind," commentators construed the conflict as war, pure and simple. Jerome refers to these verses, says that the saints themselves suffered the conflict, and reminds us that we should expect it as well.[226] Ambrose says simply, "Your enemy is your body, which wars against your mind."[227] And, as we saw in the first chapter, it was specifically this conflict which Augustine found in the Bible but not in Plato.[228] The battle is uncertain because the mind cannot claim a superiority; but, on the contrary, it "is drawn and held, even against its will."[229]

The Christian is faced with the continuing state of civil war. Caesarius sees man's body in a constant state of uproar:

> Let [the Christian] see how our land, that is, our body, is oppressed at one time by the spirit of fornication, at another by anger or fury. Again it is disturbed by the darts of avarice or struck by the javelins of envy, then it is darkened by the vice of pride. In whatever way the flesh lusts against the spirit or the spirit against the flesh, our land is agitated by exceedingly dangerous battles.[230]

But while battle habitually rages and while the outcome is uncertain, victory for the soul is possible. Valerian asserts that the fight against vices begins by defeating the flesh and that the victory can come daily: "In a raging fight, a crown of victory soon covers the volunteer soldier. . . . You do not lack an opportunity to win a victory every day, if you are willing to resist the desires of the flesh."[231]

With the victory comes tranquility: "May it be granted to us, after we have struggled nobly and subdued the spirit of the flesh, which is an enemy to God, when our soul is in a calm and tranquil state, to be called the sons of peace."[232] The ultimate peace is obtained at the resurrection, when there will be a restoration of the harmony between the body and the soul:

For then, such will be the harmony between flesh and spirit, while the spirit, with no need of nourishment, will so keep alive the subjugated flesh, that there will be no disagreement between the parts of our nature: just as outside ourselves we shall have no enemy to face, so we shall not have ourselves as enemies within.[233]

A foretaste of that harmony is, however, possible in this life, as we end the civil war within us:

Subjecting the spirit of the flesh to divine law, let us live peacefully, having been dissolved into the new and peaceful man and having become one from two. For the definition of peace is the harmony of dissonant parts. Once the civil war in our nature is expelled, then, we also, being at peace within ourselves, become peace.[234]

In spite of the threatening and rebellious nature of the flesh, victory is possible for the soul; and with this victory comes peace.

In this chapter I have outlined the major images of the body-soul conflict in the Latin literature of the Middle Ages. The images derive from man's experiences with the natural world, from his domestic life, and from the larger social institutions, as writers sought ways to make the complex matter of morality more easily comprehensible. Images of light and dark, of fire, earth, and water, of burden, ascent, sailorship, and husk-kernel, thorn, swine, horse and rider, and of inner and outer man explained moral choice by analogies drawn from nature. The domestic setting provided the images of dwelling place, vessel, ladder, knife, musical instrument, and tomb, and the especially popular images of clothing and husband-wife(-lover). From the public relationships of men came images of judge, prison, and slavery, and the very dramatic images of kingdom, king, rebellion, and war.

In Chapter III we will see that while the traditions are modified somewhat in the Middle English literature, most of the images remain and

can be seen functioning in the Debate Between the Body and the Soul. In the final chapter, we will see the images of the body-soul conflict appearing in a nonreligious literary work of the late Middle Ages. The presence of these images in the stanzaic Morte Arthur reveals the author's interest in the moral choices at the heart of the poem and should enhance our appreciation of the richness and complexity of his artistry.

---

1. Philip Wheelwright, Metaphor and Reality (Bloomington, Indiana, 1964), pp. 116-17, for example, notes that the earliest recorded use of a light symbol is on the lintel of a door to a school which flourished about 2000 B. C. in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley: "May he who sits in the places of learning shine like the sun."

2. On the origins of the metaphysics of light, see Joseph Mazzeo, Medieval Cultural Tradition in Dante's Comedy (New York, 1968), pp. 56ff.

3. Psychologie et Morale aux XII^{e} et XIV^{e} Siècles, Tome II, Problèmes de Morale (Louvain, 1948), p. 493.

4. The Consolation of Philosophy, trans. Richard Green (Indianapolis, 1962), p. 69.

5. Isaac, in Seven Exegetical Works, trans. Michael P. McHugh, The Fathers of the Church, 65 (Washington, 1971), p. 24.

6. Ibid., p. 51.

7. Robert J. O'Connell, "Action and Contemplation," in Augustine: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. R. A. Marcus (Garden City, New York, 1972), p. 55, n. 16.

8. Saint Gregory the Great, Dialogues, trans. Odo John Zimmerman, The Fathers of the Church, 39 (New York, 1959), pp. 242-43.

9. With the exception of Adam receiving the "breath of life," the image of air was not dwelt upon by Christian writers in discussions of the relationship between the body and the soul.

10. The Hymns of the Breviary and Missal, ed. Matthew Britt (New York, 1955), pp. 5-6: "Extinguish the flames of strife, banish harmful heat, grant us health of body and true peace of heart" (trans. Britt).

11. Isaac, p. 50.

12. Prudentius, trans. H. J. Thomson (Cambridge, 1949-53), I, 283.

13. Morals on the Book of Job, trans. Members of the English Church (Oxford, 1850), III, 524, and II, 79.

14. Dialogues, pp. 203-04.

15. The Homilies of Saint Jerome, Vol. I (Homilies 1-59) on the Psalms, trans. Marie Liguori Ewald, The Fathers of the Church, 48 (Washington, 1964), p. 243.

16. Rudolph Allers, "Microcosmus from Anaximandros to Paracelsus," Traditio, 2 (1944), 322.

17. Treatises on Penance, trans. William P. Le Saint (London, 1959), p. 68 and p. 216, n. 165.

18. Exegetic Homilies, trans. Agnes Clare Way, The Fathers of the Church, 46 (Washington, 1963), p. 169.

19. I Corinthians 15, 47.

20. Saint Peter Chrysologus, Selected Sermons, and Saint Valerian Homilies, trans. George E. Ganz (New York, 1953), p. 201.

21. St. Augustine, Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homilies on the First Epistle of John, Soliloquies, ed. Philip Schaff, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 7 (Grand Rapids, 1956), p. 18.

22. Morals, I, 135. A dramatic pictorial representation of the transience of worldly goods and happiness is in the various depictions of Job on his dunghill. See, for example, Jean Fouquet's Job on His Dungheap in The Hours of Etienne Chevalier (New York, 1971), Plate 47.

23. Saint Caesarius of Arles, Sermons, trans. Mary Magdeleine Mueller, 2 vols. (Washington, 1956, 1964), I, 150.

24. F. N. M. Diekstra, "The Seafarer 58-66a: The Flight of the Exiled Soul to its Fatherland," Neophilologus, 55 (1971), 438.

25. Trans. Ganz, p. 424.

26. Ibid., p. 314.

27. The Catholic Way, in The Catholic and Manichaean Ways of Life, trans. Donald A. Gallagher and Idella J. Gallagher, The Fathers of the Church, 56 (Washington, 1966), p. 34.

28. The "body presses down the soul" (I, 234); "the frail nature [of the body] weighs it [i.e., the soul] to the ground" (I, 235); the body "weighs down the soul" (I, 457); and "loads of carnal habits" (II, 295) burden the soul.

29. The most comprehensive study is P. Courcelle, "Flügel (Flug) der Seele," in Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, 8 (1969), 29-65.

30. Diekstra, 440.

31. Gregory of Nyssa, Ascetical Works, trans. Virginia Woods Callahan, The Fathers of the Church, 58 (Washington, 1967), p. 132.

32. Isaac, p. 51.

33. Ibid., p. 51.

34. Confessions, in Basic Writings of Saint Augustine, ed. Whitney Oates (New York, 1948), I, 7.

35. Soliloquies I, xiv, 24, trans. in An Augustine Synthesis, ed. Erich Przywara (New York, 1945), p. 1.

36. Cf. Diekstra, 439, and Richard Hamilton Green, "Alan of Lille's Anticlaudianus: Ascensus Mentis in Deum," Annuale Mediaevale, 8 (1967), 3-16.

37. St. Methodius, The Symposium: A Treatise on Chastity, trans. Herbert Musurillo (London, 1958), p. 108.

38. Jacob, in Seven Exegetical Works, p. 298.

39. Morals, III, 152.

40. Early Christian Fathers, ed. and trans. Henry Bettenson (Oxford, 1956), p. 271.

41. Select Letters of St. Jerome, trans. F. A. Wright (London, 1933), p. 22.

42. Ascetical Works, p. 65.

43. Western Asceticism, ed. Owen Chadwick, Library of Christian Classics, 12 (Philadelphia, 1958), p. 56.

44. Some Aspects of the Horse and Rider Analogy in the Debate Between the Body and the Soul (Washington, 1948), pp. 44-45.

45. Trans. Ganz, p. 423.

46. Dogmatic and Polemical Works, trans. John N. Hritzu, The Fathers of the Church, 53 (Washington, 1965), p. 132.

47. The image of the tree of virtues and vices, such as the De Fructibus Carnis et Spiritus, attributed to Hugh of St. Victor (PL CLXXVI, 997-1006) is too general to be considered here. It is a convenient way of systematically presenting a complex moral analysis. The fruit of the body will, however, be discussed in the next chapter.

48. Selected Sermons, p. 195.

49. Cf. De Doctrina Christiana, 3, 12.

50. De Res Mor., 9. Cf. On Penitence, p. 145, n. 38.

51. Morals, III, 563.

52. Selected Sermons, p. 192.

53. Exegetic Homilies, p. 301.

54. Letters, p. 95.

55. Dialogues, pp. 59-60.

56. Ambrose, Creation, Paradise, and Cain and Abel, trans. John J. Savage, The Fathers of the Church, 42 (Washington, 1961), p. 256.

57. Historia Animalium, 8, 1 (589a, 2). The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York, 1941), p. 636.

58. Cf. Metamorphosis, II. 83-86, and the examination of this tradition in Theodore Silverstein, "The Fabulous Cosmogony of Bernardus Silvestris," MP, 46 (1948-49), 97.

59. In Ecclesiasten Homiliae (PL CLXXV, 174c). Trans. Jerome Taylor, The Didascalicon of Hugh of St. Victor: A Medieval Guide to the Arts (New York, 1961), p. 176, n. 3.

60. Exegetic Homilies, p. 331.

61. Ambrose, Paradise, p. 329.

62. Trans. Green, p. 84.

63. Gregory of Nyssa, Ascetical Works, p. 28.

64. "The Mouth of the Boar as a Symbol in Medieval Literature," Romance Philology, 22 (1969), 281-99.

65. The two best works studying this tradition are Beryl Rowland, "The Horse and Rider Figure in Chaucer's Works," UTQ, XXXV (1966), 246-59, and Mary Ursula Vogel, Some Aspects of the Horse and Rider Analogy in the Debate Between the Body and the Soul.

66. Saint Augustine, The Teacher, The Free Choice of the Will, Grace and Free Will, trans. Robert P. Russell (Washington, 1968). See pp. 106-62.

67. Exegetic Homilies, p. 325. Cf. Jeremias 5, 8.

68. Rowland, in the article mentioned above, calls attention to illustrations of Prudentius' Psychomachia of Superbia and Luxuria being overthrown by their mounts (247, n. 4). Cf. also D. W. Robertson, Jr., Preface to Chaucer (Princeton, 1962), Figure 8, where the horses of two lovers "eye each other with an attitude that amusingly parallels that of the lovers" (p. 30).

69. The Poems of Prudentius, trans. M. Clement Eagan, The Fathers of the Church, 52 (Washington, 1962), p. 48.

70. The Art of Courtly Love, trans. John J. Parry (New York, 1959), p. 27.

71. Ibid., p. 28.

72. Hugh of St. Victor, On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith (De Sacramentis), trans. Roy J. DeFerrari (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1951), p. 130.

73. Jacob, p. 122.

74. Saint Chrysostom, Homilies on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, ed. Philip Schaff et al., A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, 1956), p. 73.

75. The Catholic Way, pp. 8-9.

76. The Patriarchs, in Seven Exegetical Works, pp. 260-61.

77. Gregory, Morals, III, 447.

78. "The Inner Man," Augustine: A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 177.

79. Caesarius, Sermons, I, 19.

80. Ascetical Works, p. 62.

81. Jerome, Letters, p. 65. Cf. Psalm 42, 5-6.

82. "Hugh of St. Victor on Virtues and Vices," trans. Joachim Wach, Anglican Theological Review, 31 (1949), 29.

83. Elizabeth Van Witzleben, Stained Glass in French Cathedrals (New York, 1968), Plate XXI. For details of the early history of depicting the soul as an infant, see Adolphe Napoleon Didron, Christian Iconography, trans. E. J. Millington (1886; rptd., New York, 1965), II, 173-77.

84. André Martin, Le Livre Illustré in France au XV^{e} Siècle (Paris, 1931), Planche I.

85. Caesarius, Sermons, I, 155.

86. Lactantius, The Divine Institutes, Books I-VII, trans. Mary Francis McDonald, The Fathers of the Church, 49 (Washington, 1964), p. 505; Tertullian, De Anima, 3, 8, 4.

87. E.g., Basil, Exegetic Homilies, p. 321. The body-as-dwelling tradition has been studied by Roberta Cornelius, The Figurative Castle (Bryn Mawr, 1930).

88. Prudentius, Poems, p. 71.

89. Prudentius, The Origin of Sin, trans. Thomson in Prudentius, I, 271.

90. Ambrose, Jacob, p. 297.

91. Lactantius, Divine Institutes, p. 504.

92. Chrysologus, Selected Sermons, p. 234. The womb of the Virgin is also, from Canticles 4, 12, "a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up."

93. Ambrose, Flight from the World, in Seven Exegetical Works, p. 282.

94. Caesarius, Sermons, I, 327.

95. E.g., Augustine, Confessions, p. 82, and Bonaventure, Journey, in The Works of Bonaventure, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson, New Jersey, 1960), I, 19.

96. Ruth H. Cline, "Heart and Eyes," Romance Philology, 25, 3 (1972), 285.

97. Divine Institutes, p. 502.

98. Ibid., p. 503.

99. Ibid., p. 505.

100. Against the Pelagians, in Dogmatic and Polemical Works, p. 258.

101. De Res Mor., 9 and 16. Cited in On Penitence, p. 145, n. 38.

102. Jerome, Homilies, p. 303.

103. Ibid., p. 304.

104. Journey, p. 13.

105. Commentary on Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist, Homilies 48-88, trans. Thomas Aquinas Goggin (New York, 1960), p. 297.

106. On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith, p. 189.

107. However, commentators expressed shock at the thought that Christ himself could have had fleshly stirrings.

108. Cf. Ambrose: "The soul, then, is the user, the body that which is being used." Death as a Good, in Seven Exegetical Works, p. 91.

109. Jacob, p. 125.

110. Dialogues, p. 198.

111. Ambrose, Death as a Good, p. 90. See also Jacob, p. 145.

112. Homilies, p. 16.

113. The love between the soul and the body is related to God's love for the universe expressed as harmony (Cf. The Consolation of Philosophy, Book 2, Poem 8). A complete discussion of harmony as a recurring theme in the Middle Ages is in Leo Spitzer, Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony, ed. Anna Hatcher (Baltimore, 1963).

114. Exegetic Homilies, p. 230.

115. Tertullian, On Penitence, p. 145, n. 38.

116. The Collected Dialogues, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (New York, 1961), pp. 437-38.

117. Sermons, I, 322-23.

118. The visit-to-the-tomb formula, to be discussed in the next chapter, gains strength when one realizes that he is actually seeing a tomb within a tomb.

119. Hom. in Leviticum, 6, 2. Quoted in Early Christian Fathers, p. 285.

120. The Divine Institutes, pp. 504-05.

121. Isaac, p. 64. Cf. also, "We are souls, but our members are our clothing."

122. Ibid., p. 12. Cf. also Canticles 5, 3: "I have put off my garment, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?"

123. Ibid., p. 21.

124. Ibid., p. 64.

125. Morals, I, 538, 552.

126. P. 192.

127. Basil, Exegetic Homilies, p. 293. Cf. Colossians 3, 12.

128. The Catholic Way, p. 30.

129. Caesarius, Sermons, II, 39.

130. Athanasius, Contra Arianos, 2, 7, 8; quoted from Early Christian Fathers, p. 387.

131. Chrysologus, Selected Sermons, p. 199.

132. With an understanding of this tradition, the Crucifixion scenes showing Christ on the cross clothed only in a loin cloth, surrounded by figures fully, even lavishly, dressed, gains impact. Consider, for example, an illumination in the Medicean Laurentian Library which can be divided into three major sections. The top section consists of Christ, nude to the waist, the upper half of his body against the sky. The middle part of the illumination shows Christ from the waist down, a crowd of people and soldiers, the Maries, and at Christ's feet a skull and a few bones. The third section is a panel beneath, showing a Pietá scene before the tomb with soldiers and dignitaries around. The irony is that Christ, who took on the garment of the flesh is now disrobed literally and spiritually, while those whom he came to save are still in their garments of flesh and clothing. Guido Biagi, Reproductions from Illuminated Manuscripts: Fifty Plates from Manuscripts in the R. Medicean Laurentian Library (Firenze, 1914), Plate XXXXI.

133. Chrysologus, Selected Sermons, pp. 166ff. Cf. Ephesians 6, 11ff.

134. Jerome, Homilies, p. 336.

135. Chrysologus, Selected Sermons, pp. 65ff.

136. Caesarius, Sermons, I, 361; Cf. also I, 230.

137. Exegetic Homilies, p. 224.

138. The Breviloquium, in The Works of Bonaventure, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson, New Jersey, 1963), II, p. 131.

139. Donald R. Howard, The Three Temptations (Princeton, 1966), p. 59, cites De Sermone Domini, I, 12; Moralia 4, 27; In Pentateuchum Commentarii (PL 91, 214); Peter Lombard, Sententiae 2, 24; 5-11, and Commentarius in Genesium I, 15; and others.

140. Breviloquium, p. 130.

141. Against Rufinus, Dogmatic and Polemical Works, p. 96.

142. Hugh of St. Victor, On the Sacraments, p. 151.

143. Cf. Ephesians 5, 22-23; "Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord: Because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church."

144. St. Methodius, The Symposium, Musurillo's note, p. 237. The text itself is on pp. 151ff.

145. The religious use of erotic imagery has been treated by Nicolas J. Panella, The Kiss Sacred and Profane: An Interpretive History of Kiss Symbolism and Related Religio-Erotic Themes (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969).

146. Canticles I, 2; Isaac, p. 15.

147. Ibid., p. 16.

148. Ibid., p. 18.

149. "Heart and Eyes," 286-87.

150. Ibid.; in the Second Homily on the Canticles.

151. Ibid.; from F. A. Wright and T. A. Sinclair, A History of Later Latin Literature (London, 1969), p. 111.

152. Ibid.; from J. E. Raby, The Oxford Book of Medieval Latin Verse (Oxford, 1959), p. 348.

153. Preface, p. 374.

154. For the related principle of the two loves, see Preface, pp. 65 and 463ff.

155. City of God, in Basic Writings of Saint Augustine, Vol. II, ed. Whitney J. Oates (New York, 1948), p. 261.

156. Saint Augustine, Commentary on the Lord's Sermon on the Mount with Seventeen Related Sermons, trans. Denis J. Kavanagh, The Fathers of the Church, II (New York, 1951), p. 55.

157. Ibid., p. 68.

158. Ibid., p. 63.

159. Trans. Musurillo, p. 91.

160. Ascetical Works, trans. M. Monica Wagner (New York, 1950), p. 207.

161. Sermons, I, 66.

162. Sermons, II, 173.

163. _Isaac_, p. 25.

164. _Morals_, II, 270.

165. _Ibid._, III, 110.

166. John 4, 5ff.

167. Ed. Philip Schaff, p. 103.

168. _Ibid._, p. 104.

169. The concept of Christ as Bridegroom was frequently glossed by reference to the wise and foolish virgins of Matthew 25, 1-13. In this parable, Christ "exemplifies either the pure emotions of the wise or the impure senses of the unwise. If Eve, that is, the emotions of the first woman, had kept her lamp lighted, she would not have enfolded us in the meshes of her sin." (Ambrose, _Paradise_, p. 243.) Cf. also Jerome, _Letters_, p. 61.

In this context Andreas Capellanus' advice to Walter about how he might reject love is clear:

> Therefore, Walter, accept this health-giving teaching we offer you, and pass by all the vanities of the world, so that when the Bridegroom cometh to celebrate the greater nuptials, and the cry ariseth in the night, you may go forth to meet Him with you lamps filled and to go in with Him to that divine marriage. . . . Avoid then, Walter, practicing the mandates of love, and labor in constant watchfulness so that when the Bridegroom cometh He may find you wakeful. . . .

(Trans. Parry, p. 212).

170. _Morals_, II, 517.

171. Allers, 322.

172. Caesarius, _Sermons_, II, 398.

173. _Morals_, III, 408.

174. _Confessions_, p. 151.

175. _Jacob_, p. 137.

176. Morton W. Bloomfield, _The Seven Deadly Sins_ (East Lansing, 1967), p. 8.

177. P. Courcelle, "Traditions Platonicienne et Chrétienne du Corps-Prison," _Revue des Études Latines_, 43 (1965), 406-43.

178. _Ibid._, 406.

179. _Cain and Abel_, p. 435.

180. Basil, _Exegetic Homilies_, p. 223.

181. _In Psalmum CXLI_, 18.

182. Trans. Green, p. 39.

183. _Origin of Sin_, in _Prudentius_, I, 269.

184. "A Hymn for the Burial of the Dead," _Poems_, p. 69.

185. _Prudentius_, I, 343.

186. _Morals_, I, 445.

187. _On the Misery of the Human Condition_, ed. D. R. Howard (New York, 1969), pp. 24-25.

188. With the image of the body as prison in mind we can appreciate the power of the stained glass legend of St. Catherine in the Angers Cathedral. (Reproduced in _Stained Glass in French Cathedrals_, Plate 10.) The poignancy of Christ who came into the prison of the flesh to redeem man visiting St. Catherine, a saint whose name was synonymous with the contempt of the flesh, in prison is moving.

189. Prudentius, _Poems_, p. 124.

190. "Letter to Can Grande," in _Plato to Alexander Pope_, ed. Walter Sutton and Vivian Sutton (New York, 1966), p. 116.

191. Basil, recalling the Fall. _Exegetic Homilies_, p. 160.

192. _Consolation of Philosophy_, p. 104.

193 _On the Christian Mode of Life_, in _Ascetical Works_, p. 127.

194. Matthew 3, 2; 5, 13; 6, 13, 33; 9, 35; 13, 11, 24; 16, 19; 19, 14; Mark 12, 34; 14, 25; Luke 1, 33; 9, 60; 17, 21; 22, 29; and John 3, 3.

195. Romans 14, 17; I Corinthians 4, 20; 15, 24, 50; Ephesians 5, 5; 2 Peter 1, 11; Apocalypse 11, 15.

196. Macrobius, _Commentary on the Dream of Scipio_, trans. William Harris Stahl (New York, 1952),

197. Caesarius, _Sermons_, II, 3.

198. _De Scripturis_ (PL 175, 23).

199. _Letter to Can Grande_, in _Plato to Alexander Pope_, p. 115.

200. Caesarius, _Sermons_, II, 62. The quotation is from Romans 8, 7.

201. _Answer to Skeptics_, trans. Denis J. Kavanagh, in _Writings of St. Augustine_, The Fathers of the Church, 5 (New York, 1948), p. 219.

202. _Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount_, pp. 23-24.

203. "Die Seele als minor mundus und als regnum: ein Beitrag zur Psychologie der mittleren Franziskanerschule," _Miscellanea Mediaevalia_, 5 (1968), 56-72.

204. _City of God_, in _Basic Writings_, II, 243.

205. _Confessions_, p. 213.

206. "The Allegory of the Soul as Fortress in Old English Poetry," _Anglia_, 88 (1970), 506.

207. _Dialogues_, p. 189.

208. _Faith, Hope and Charity_, trans. Bernard M. Peebles, in _Writings of Saint Augustine_, The Fathers of the Church, 2 (New York, 1947), p. 392.

209. "The _Seafarer_ 58-66a," 440, 445 n. 33; Augustine (_Enaratio in Psalmum LXXXV_, II), Mamertus Claudianus (_De Statu Animae_), and Gregory (_Expositiones in Librum Primum Regum_, I, 19).

210. Stadter, 59, writes: "Der Wille ist der 'rex.' Der Verstand übernimmt die Rolle, die im Reich die Ratgeber haben."

211. _De Anima_ 15, 4. _On Penitence_, p. 145, n. 38.

212. _Jacob_, p. 121.

213. _City of God_, p. 264.

214. James Joseph Mark Curry, Alcuin: _De Ratione Animae: A Text with Introduction, Critical Apparatus and Translation_, Dissertation (Cornell University, 1966), p. 74.

215. _Isaac_, p. 21.

216. _Homilies_, p. 67.

217. _On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith_, pp. 95-96. An alternative image was of the mistress and servant. Outward adornment for Caesarius (I, 80) could not check inner sin: "What benefit is derived from adorning the servant and disgracing the mistress, in other words, in fixing the body and robbing the soul of good works?" If the soul is not wary, a reversal occurs:

> The soul should rule the body, not the body the soul for the soul is the mistress of the body while the body is the handmaid of the soul. Therefore, unhappy is the soul which is dominated by the body and makes a mistress out of a servant. Truly, the soul which is subject to vices of the flesh becomes the servant of the body, because it loses the faith of its Lord and endures the slavery of sin. (II, 58)

Appropriately, the servant Joseph maintained the mastery of his soul when he refused to be seduced by his mistress. (Genesis 39, 7ff.)

218. Gregory, Morals, III, 153.

219. Augustine, City of God, pp. 262-63.

220. Alexandre Masseron and Marion A. Habig, The Franciscans: St. Francis of Assissi and His Three Orders (Chicago, 1959), pp. 208-09.

221. Ibid., p. 209.

222. Hugh of St. Victor, On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith, pp. 96-97. Cf. Romans 6, 12: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so as to obey the lusts thereof."

223. Jacob, pp. 130-31.

224. Confessions, p. 169.

225. Prudentius, I, 241-43.

226. Homilies, pp. 367-68.

227. Death as a Good, p. 90. Cf. also Isaac, p. 13.

228. Confessions, p. 108.

229. Ibid., p. 117.

230. Sermons, II, 123.

231. Homilies, p. 402.

232. Basil, Exegetic Homilies, p. 211.

233. Faith, Hope, and Charity, p. 445.

234. Gregory of Nyssa, On Perfection, in Ascetical Works, pp. 102-03.

CHAPTER III

THE IMAGES OF THE MIDDLE ENGLISH TRADITION AND THE DEBATE BETWEEN THE BODY AND THE SOUL

It has been the aim of this study to examine the metaphor of conflict between the body and the soul which writers of the Middle Ages used to explain man's moral condition. As Robert W. Ackerman has written in an article in which he discusses the use of the conflict by Middle English writers and its appearance in the Debate Between the Body and the Soul, "The metaphor dramatizes with a peculiarly direct and satisfying psychological realism man's feelings about moral choice."[1] But beyond employing the basic metaphor, medieval Latin writers also developed images for the body-soul relationship itself and frequently used them to make the moral conflict even more graphic. We saw in the last chapter that these images exist in traditional patterns in the Latin Literature. In this chapter we will see that church reform and preaching contributed to a movement of general instruction in the essentials of the Faith in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and that preachers would have found in the writings of the Fathers, and could have appreciated for their own purposes, the utility of the body-soul conflict. We will also discover that Middle English religious literature has most of the same body-soul images as the Latin literature, and that the images were sufficiently well-known to appear in the Debate Between the Body and the Soul as devices which the poet uses repeatedly to remind his audience of man's moral condition.

The body-soul conflict and images enjoyed extraordinary popularity in England in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as part of a wide dissemination of Christian doctrine which came about as a result of two major factors: church reform, with an emphasis on teaching the basic elements of the Faith to individual parishioners, and the coming of the preaching friars. The Third and Fourth Lateran Councils of 1179 and 1215 initiated a program of reform, and a decree of 1215 required parishioners to make annual confession and priests to question their penitents about their knowledge of the Faith, including "the fourteen articles of the Creed, the Ten Commandments of the Law and two of the Gospel, the seven Sacraments, the works of mercy, and the vices and virtues."[2] In addition to private instruction there was an increase in popular preaching in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. D. W. Robertson, Jr., has challenged the notion of "the quaint old thirteenth-century priest who fumbles through a rare sermon" by showing that "we do not lack evidence that, in the ordinary parish, sermons were regularly delivered on Sundays and on feast days."[3] Ackerman, while maintaining that in the thirteenth century sermons were not so regularly delivered, writes that by the mid-fourteenth century records do testify to many sermons by parish priests.[4]

The great preachers, however, were the friars; and their arrival in England in the thirteenth century contributed to a revival of preaching. As Homer Pfander has written, "With the coming of the friar, sermons no longer were delivered infrequently, or as seldom as four times a year. Frequent preaching in the English tongue resounded in city and hamlet."[5] The friars were, as one lost soul complained, "As thikke as

motes in the sonnebeem." They were ubiquitous:

> The friars preached in many places and at many times. In the street, in the market, in house or castle, in private chapels, in cemeteries at the preaching cross, and in churches ranging from the meanest to the greatest. They preached to lay folk, clerks, prelates, knights, and kings. They preached to nuns and Benedictine monks. They preached commonly at Mass either between the creed and offertory or else after the latter, and also in procession. They preached very brief sermons devised to please the common people; they preached collations, long sermons on Sunday afternoon after dinner. They preached on Feast Days, or at funerals, or at the dedication of churches or on various occasions at the universities.[6]

Preachers carried the Christian doctrine throughout England. When one considers that the common people were largely illiterate, the importance of preaching can hardly be overstressed. Owst has said of preaching,

> It remains vitally true that by such means and such alone the common people in those early times did as a matter of fact receive their first lessons in general knowledge. To this extent our pulpit may well claim to be the parent of popular adult education. . . .[7]

Two very general observations about preaching in this period bear on the study of the metaphor of the body and the soul. The first is that the preachers relied heavily on the Fathers, and the second is that there was always the impulse for simplification in preaching.

Humbert of Romans, the fifth Master-General of the Dominicans, wrote that for true preaching, the preacher "will give great care to study what others have taught about the Scriptures, in order to find his inspiration in the holy Doctors rather than in himself."[8] Robertson and Owst have discovered in preachers of the late Middle Ages precisely this reliance on tradition. Of thirteenty-century preaching Robertson wrote, "The sermons of ordinary parishes were probably in many instances sermons of the Fathers, or sermons composed or collected by a prominent bishop."[9] And Owst, of later preachers:

> Our homilists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries speak and write the language of earlier generations of preachers. They borrow wholesale their phrases, their maxims, their arguments, even their illustrations.[10]

It is thus natural that Middle English preachers would continue to use the traditional body-soul model for the moral struggle, and in fact the metaphor is found everywhere in sermons and other religious writings. Frequently the Fathers are quoted with no indication of the specific source. The Speculum Christiani, for example, in its discussion of lechery, cites Jerome:

> Ieronimus: Nothyng es more gloriouse than to vencose the flesch, and nothynge es more foule, ne werse than to be ouercomen of the flesche.[11]

Secondly, preachers, either by necessity or design, simplified Christian doctrine for their listeners. Although the instructional books contained systematic analyses of the complexities of the Faith, the preachers probably did not present comprehensive programs to their hearers. Robertson points out that a "program of sermons based on the Gospel, Epistle, or on the characteristics of the saints, did not allow for extensive exposition of special subjects, such as the Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ave, the Sins, or the Sacraments."[12] There is the additional problem of ignorance on the part of the priests and friars. In the thirteenth century, for example, "The average parish priest had no Bible, knew little or no theology, and had no training in the art of preaching."[13] But even if sermons were addressed to specialized topics, there were incentives for brevity and simplicity. Owst says that the friars arrived, "Bringing with them minds reared amid the riches of continental civilization and learning;"[14] but it is just this learning which Humbert of Romans seeks to repress for the sake of effectiveness:

> Many preachers have a predeliction for words, repeating beyond measure, now the parts of the sermon, again the distinctions of the authorities; giving reasons or examples, in words that express one and the same thing, repeating continually; at all times being far too prolix.[15]

Humbert says, "Brevity fosters devotion," and that the wise preacher will trim his sermons to the essentials:

> A good preacher, if he is prudent, will see to it that he does not say many things, and will say them in few words; and if he observes that he has prepared too much matter, he will lay aside whatever is irrelevant, and give to his starved audience bread, a necessary and substantial food, which will be beneficial to them.

What constituted "a necessary and substantial food" was, of course, left to the judgment of the preacher. But if we ask, What one way did the homilists and Christian writers have of objectifying the moral struggle, a way which was at once immediate, simple, and compelling? we must acknowledge the effectiveness of the body-soul conflict. Not only would late medieval Christian writers have found the manifold variations of the body-soul metaphor in the Fathers, but they would have discovered independently the advantages it offered.

New images of the body-soul struggle were invented and used in the Middle English period, such as pieces in a game of chess or the body as a treacherous hill of sand on which the soul tries to stand;[16] and such invention testifies to the continuing power of the body-soul analogy to generate new metaphors of the moral struggle. There are also some changes in the traditions: captivity to the bodily passions is not usually presented as slavery, although the body as servant of the soul who strives to become the master is still used. The age also saw a great modification in emphasis--the body as earth or dung, with its vileness, attains new importance. Generally, however, the same

images are used repeatedly throughout the period which were established by earlier writers. The soul is still the light of the mind which the body darkens. The body still seeks "to dyrken (off entent)/ The eye off thyn entendement."[17]

The natural images of fire, water, and earth continue to be used, with the last becoming very important. The fire of passion still hinders men from being good. Robert Mannyng of Brunne in Handlyng Synne discusses the fight against the flesh and says that when one is alone with a woman, "þy þoght, by herte, cumþ sone on fyre."[18] A tale in the Gesta Romanorum relates that a clerk administers a test to see if a woman suspected of infidelity is in fact an adulteress:

> He took hold of her hand; and, as if accidentally, pressed his finger upon her pulse. Then in a careless tone, adverting to the person whom she was presumed to love, her pulse immediately quickened to a surprising degree, and acquired a feverish heat.[19]

When the husband's name is mentioned the clerk finds no similar symptoms of passion, "whereby he plainly perceived that her affections were alienated." Chaucer's Parson notes that Jerome confessed, "The brennynge of lecherie boyled in al his body," and the Parson believes that everyone has experienced a like temptation: "I woot wel sykerly that they been deceyved that seyn that they ne be nat tempted in hir body."[20] Adulterers shall burn in hell in fire and brymstone--"in fyr, for hire lecherye; in brymston, for the stynk of hire ordure."[21]

In the Latin tradition, we found an image of sin as wateriness, and as a stream coursing through the body; and this convention was maintained in the Middle English period. In Jacob's Well "þe dedly watyr of curse entryth ȝou be ȝoure v wyttes,"[22] and forms a wose, or slime,

in the pit which is the body. Moreover, this pit must be cleansed and transformed into a well in which the waters of grace may freely flow. But before cleansing, the soul is in danger of drowning in the corrupt water of the body:

> Ȝoure soule, in þis pytt of corrupte watyr, nedyth to cry in-to god: "Saluum me fac, domine, quoniam intrauerunt aque usque ad animam meam." Saue me, þou god, fro drenchyng, for watrys of cursyng han entryd my pytt to my soule.

The soul is also a mariner steering the ship of the body to the haven of eternal life.[23]

English writers of the late Middle Ages, like their earlier counterparts, saw man as composed of earth, his earthiness inhibiting the ascent of his soul. The earth of which the body is composed attracts the attention of man to things of the world:

> Ryght so euery man be keende of þe bodie, þat is made of þe erthe, desireth erthly þinges; but by keende of þe sowle, þat is made vn-to þe likeness of God, desireþ heven, to haue þer-in is dwellynge.[24]

As in the earlier writers, the tendency of the soul to remain morally earth-bound is expressed in terms of a weight. The author of a twelfth-century sermon sees the bodies which had been "kept fast by the weight of sins," arising at the Resurrection.[25] The author of the Ancren Riwle compares sensual anchoresses to birds of much flesh and few feathers, such as the ostrich:

> The ostrich and other such birds, because of their great weight of flesh, make only a pretence of flying, beating their wings while their feet remain always near the ground. So with the sensual anchoress who lives for the pleasures of the body and cultivates her own comfort; the weight of her flesh and bodily vices prevent her from flying. . . .[26]

Richard Rolle, in the Contra Amatores Mundi, says that "the intoxication of the flesh weighs down the uprightness of reason";[27] and Julian of

Norwich adds the image of darkness when she says that Christ sighs because "we are so spiritually blind and weighed down by our mortal flesh and murky sin that we cannot clearly see our Lord's blessed face."[28] The Pilgrim in The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man asks to be released from his body, which Grace Dieu grants; and he soars aloft for a short time. When he returns to the body he is dejected by the burden which he feels. He is,

> Cheyned, ryht as ys An Ape,
> Vn-to a clog, & must yt swe,
> And fro thenys may nat remewe,
> ffor my body, gret & large,
> Ys the Clog that me doth charge,
> Wych letteth, wyth hys gret wheyhte,
> That I may nat flen on hyhte;
> ffor euere, wyth hys mortal lawe,
> Doun to therthe he doth me drawe.[29]

But man's earthy quality is more than an inhibitor of flights of wisdom and virtue. It is also a reminder of the soul's dependence on God and of the mortality of the body. The author of the Ancren Riwle wrote that,

> God did not want [the soul] to leap into pride, or to aspire and fall as Lucifer did, without weight to hold him down, and therefore God tied a heavy clod of earth to the soul, like a man hobbling a cow or any other animal that is liable to stray.[30]

The author of the York Creation of Adam and Eve has God proclaim that He has made man of earth as a check to pride and as a reminder of his death to come:

> Of the simplest part of earth that is here
> I shall make man, and for this skill:
> For to abate his haughty cheer,
> Both his great Pride and other ill;
> And also for to have in mind
> How simple he is at his making,
> For as feeble I shall him find
> When he is dead, at his ending.[31]

The use of the body, particularly in the odiousness of its decay, as a lesson in man's mortality characterizes much late medieval literature and art.[32] While Carlton Brown sees a shift in emphasis from terror in the fourteenth century to hope in the fifteenth in poems about death,[33] Theodore Spenser sees even in the fifteenth century Northern Europe "frenzied about death. . . . Emphasis upon death seems to have mounted like a rushing tide."[34]

The concentration on death has been designated a "spasmodic reaction against an excessive sensuality" by Huizinga,[35] and attributed to the plagues by Rosemary Woolf:

> The irreverent treatment of a corpse was thus no longer a poetic idea, springing from a desire to probe beneath the superficial, conventional decencies, but must have been widely evident on account of the necessity of organizing burials on such a vast scale.[36]

Whatever its causes, the thought of death pervaded late Middle English literature, and the decaying body became a powerful symbol of the transience of worldly welfare.

The Speculum Sacerdotale says that one reason we put ashes on our forehead is to remind us that we are earth:

> We moste haue this in mynde, for we are made of the erþe, and to erþe we shall turne ayeyn, as God hym-self seiþ in the þridde chapeter of Genesy: "Terra es et in terram redibis. Man, thow art erþe, and to erþe thow shalt turne." And alle the transitorie goodis of the worlde shal wex to fliþe and noȝt, for all the world shal passe a-way and the vnlaweful covetise of it.[37]

Everyman is intended to teach the lesson that life is transitory and that although sin seems sweet now, it will cause the soul to weep when the body lies in clay.[38] And the earliest "earth upon earth" poem, dating from about 1307, contains a very compact and vivid lesson on human transience:

Erþe toc of erþe erþe wyþ woh,
Erþe oþer erþe to þe erþe droh,
Erþe leyde erþe in erþene þroh,
Þo heuede erþe of erþe ynoh.[39]

The poem expresses the ironies of man's condition as seen through his earthiness. Earth (man) received from the earth worldly possessions but in taking them, man revealed a vicious impulse. The earth eventually claimed man; man was buried by other earthly, but living, people; and in his death man now will have enough of the earth that he formerly had sought. A longer poem with the same theme makes the lesson explicit:

Þenk man in lond on þi last ende,
Whar of þou com and whider schaltou wend.
Make þe wel at on wiþ him þat is so hend,
And dred þe of þe dome lest sin þe schend.[40]

Many times the vision of death was much more horrible and graphic. The Prick of Conscience dwells on the foulness of the body which is intended to bring humility to men: "For man suld here þe meker be/ Ay, when he sese and thynkes in thoght/ Of how foul matter he is wroght."[41] He credits St. Bernard with the observation that man is nothing,

Bot a foule slyme, wlatsome til men,
And a sekful of stynkand fen,
And wormes fode.[42]

St. Bernard also says, we are told, that if you consider the products of man's bodily apertures, you will see how foul the body really is:

If þow wille," he says, "ententyfly se,
And by-hold what comes fra þe
What thurgh mouthe, what thurgh nese, commonly,
And thurgh other overtes of [your] body,
A fouler myddying saw þow never nane,"
Þan a man es with flesche and bane.[43]

In death man is nothing but stinking carion, and in death worms will bite and gnaw away the flesh:

> Þarfor in erthe man sal slepe,
> Omang wormes, þat on hym sal crepe
> And gnaw on þat stynkand carcays.[44]

The Speculum of St. Edmund urges the reader to consider what he is, what his origins were, and what he shall be. His soul is in the image of God, but,

> als vn-to þi body: þou erte now vylere þan any mukke; þou was getyn of sa vile matire and sa gret fylthe, þat it is schame for to nevynn, and abhomynacyon for to thynke; þou sall be delyuerde to tades and to neddyrs for to ete.[45]

Grace Dieu in the Pilgrimage of the Life of Man says that the Pilgrim's body is a "statue of slyym unclene" and "donge and puttrefaccioun."[46] Moreover, it was engendered by worms, is a worm, and shall be worm's meat.[47] John Mirk sees in the funeral ceremony "a myrroure to vs alle." No matter how fair the flesh is in life, at death "hit begynnyth to stynke and turne to foulest careyn þat is."[48]

The horrible aspects of death and the decaying body are intended to shock men into an understanding of the eternal consequences of their moral conditions. A twelfth-century preacher makes the lesson of corruption clear as he invites his listeners to behold the tombs of the wealthy and to think about where their riches have gone. The audience will realize the passing of worldly power in this visit to the tomb as the body becomes a teacher:

> The fretted bones can therefore instruct us, and the dust of the dead man would say to us from the tomb, if these could speak, "Why, wretch, does thou toil with covetousness in this world? Or why does thou arrogantly lift thyself up in pride and evil habits and follow sin too much? Look on me and abhor thy evil thoughts and bethink thyself.[49]

The device here is what Rosemary Woolf has identified as a "warning from the dead," and she has found several examples in verses and

epitaphs, as well as in longer poems such as the following one, which begins:

Mi leeve liif þat lyvest in welþe,
In mete and drinke and fayr schroud,
In richesse, honour, and in bodili helþe,
Loke þerfore þou be nouȝt proud.

But whanne þu art in þi best lekinge,
Have mynde sum tyme I þe rede,
How foule þou schalt be and stynkinge,
A litil after þat þou art dead.

I was ful fair, now I am foul,
My faire fleisch begynneþ forto stynke;
Wormis fynden at me greet þrow,
I am hire mete, I am hire drinke.[50]

Throughout the poem there is the identification of the life of pride with the fair flesh which the body formerly had, and the knowledge that the former life was both foolish and transient.

The social rank of the speaker in the former life is not identified, but it is in a warning from a sermon cited by both Owst[51] and Woolf.[52] The speaking body was a noblewoman:

Now all men mowe sen be me,
That wor[l]dys Joye is vanyte.
I was a lady; now I am non.
I had worchepes; now it is bigon.
I was fayr and gentil both.
Now ich man wyle my body loth.
My frendys, my godes me hav forsake.
To wyrmes mete now am I take.
Of al the world now haf I noȝth
Bitt gode dedes that I wroȝth.
Only the schuln abyde wit me.
Al other thynges arn vanyte.

The warnings from the dead extended to the construction of tombs with two figures on them, beginning in the late fourteenth century: "On the top lies a statue clothed in the full dignity of royal, aristocratic, or ecclesiastical robes, whilst underneath is carved a skeleton or naked body, partly decomposed, and sometimes with worms crawling upon it."[53]

The double tomb is also found in illustrations; and it appears twice in one manuscript,[54] once depicting a king and once a lady. The double tomb for the king accompanies the story of an emperor's son who lived wickedly until he was shown the decaying body of his father, which moved him to a recognition of his sins:

> And in hys bed chawmer he gart paynt þe lyknes of his fader as he lay in his grave. And when he was styrred to any syn he beheld þe ymage of his fader, knawing wele þat he come fro þe erthe and suld turne to þe erthe.

The inscription for the double tomb of the lady declares that she was once "fresche and gay" but is now worm's meat, corruption, foul earth, and stinking slime and clay.

The image of the body as earth thus was continued in the later Middle Ages, and preachers and writers dwelt on the horrifying aspects of decay to an extent which they had not before. Similarly, the body seen by way of images of vegetation was partly of patristic origin and partly of more recent invention. A twelfth-century preacher says that the body "is like growing plants which dry and shrivel because of the sun's heat,"[55] and the body is still referred to as chaff.[56] The Speculum Sacerdotale says that a dying man ought to lie down upon either earth or chaff, "in ensaumple that askes he is, and to askes he schal turne."[57] The image of flesh and fleshly passions as thorns is also maintained. The Ancren Riwle explains that man cannot expect anything but "uncleanness and weakness" from the body, because, "precious few dry twigs bear grapes, or thorns roses."[58] And Robert Mannyng of Brunne repeats the story of St. Benedict overcoming physical passion by rolling in the thorns and says that we should not worry if our flesh "be brysl and brym," because there has never been a holy man "þat of

hys flesh ne haþ hadde sum prykyl."[59]

On the other hand a new image appeared--the body as a tree bearing foul fruit. The Ancren Riwle urges us to consider what loathsome fruit the body bears,[60] and the Pricke of Conscience quotes first St. Bernard on the foul fruits of the flesh and then Innocent:

> "Behalde," he says, "graythely and loke,
> Herbes and trese þat þou sees spryng,
> And take gude kepe what þai forth bryng;
> Herbes forth bringes floures and sede,
> And tres fair fruit and braunches to spede,
> And þou forth bringes of þi-self here
> Nites, lyse, and other vermyn sere.
> Of herbes and tres, springes baum ful gude,
> And oyle and wyne for mans fude;
> And of þe comes mykel foule thyng,
> Als fen, and uryn and spyttyng;
> Of herbes and tres comes swete savour,
> And of þe comes wlatsome stynk, and sour;
> Swilk als þe tre es with bowes,
> Swilk es þe fruyt þat on it growes."[61]

The loathsomeness of the bodily fruit is in sympathy with the prevailing intensification of the body-as-earth imagery and its emphasis on the horrible aspects of death and decay.

The concept of man as a "skilful beast"[62] was very important in the Middle English period. In the Cloud of Unknowing man is said to have two principal mights, or powers, of the mind independent of the body--reason and will--and two secondary mights which depend on the body--imagination and sensuality. In the latter two mights man exercises animal powers: "Ymaginacion & sensuality worchin beestly in alle bodely þinges."[63] Man's erect posture suggests a spiritual difference from the brutes:

> For þis seemlines it is þat a man, þe which is þe seemliest creature in body þat euer God madd, is not maad crokid to þe erthe wardes, as ben alle oþer beestes, bot uprizte to heuenwardes; for whi þat it schulde figure in licnes bodely

> þe werke of þe soul goostly, þe which falleþ to be uprizt goostly and not crokid goostly.[64]

Conversely, when man forgets his dignity, he repeats Adam's sin and turns to animal pleasure. Hilton says that David was referring to Adam when he wrote, "Homo, cum in honore esset, non intellexit; comparatus est jumentis insipientibus, et similis factus est illis."[65] We experience the same transformation, says Hilton, when we turn from spiritual things:

> See then the present misery of your soul. Your memory was once stably fixed on God, but now it has forgotten him and seeks to find rest in creatures, now one, now another, and it can never find full rest for it has lost Him in whom alone it may be found. And so it is with the understanding. The will also, once pure, with a taste and delight in spiritual things, is turned now to an animal pleasure in itself and creatures; in the senses through gluttony and sensuality, and in imagination through pride, vainglory, and covetousness.[66]

The <u>Book of Vices and Virtues</u> also states that those who turn to goods of the body are "more þan beestes."[67] In <u>The Wisdom Who is Christ</u>, Wisdom says that man is a beast when he sins:

> Thus a soule is both ffowle and fayr;
> ffowle as a best, be felyng of synne,
> ffayr as aungel of hevyn the hayr,
> by knowyng of god, by hys reson withinne.[68]

The bestiality in man is shown through gluttony and lechery according to the <u>Speculum Christiani</u>;[69] and especially through lechery says the <u>Book of Vices and Virtues</u>: "Þe synne þat makeþ moste a man or a woman be like to a foule best is þe synne of lecherie."[70]

As in the Latin tradition, the animals used to represent carnality in the Middle English period are diverse. Hilton says that one who indulges his five bodily senses is like a goat, "a beast of the flock"; and that the thoughts and affections of such a person "are unclean as

goats."[71] Canine images occasionally appear, as in the Gesta Romanorum: "The dog is carnal affections," "The savage dog is the flesh," and ". . . the wolf [is] the flesh."[72] The two constants of the animal images, however, are the swine and the horse.

> They þat lufes fleschly,
> Ere lykenede to þe swyne:
> In filthe þan will þay lye,
> Thaire fairehede will þay tyne.
> Their lufe partes purely
> And puttede es in pyne;
> Swetter es lufe gastely,
> Þat neuer-more wyll dyme.[73]

The horse-and-rider image was very popular in the Middle English period as a way of illustrating the moral struggle. The Gesta Romanorum relates the story of a king on a journey who came to a crossroad where a cross informed him that different roads would bring opposite effects to him and his horse: e.g., "Oh, King, if you ride this way, you yourself will find good entertainment, but your horse will get nothing to eat."[74] The king wisely decides on this way, and the application is made: the king is "any good Christian" and the horse is the body.

The Speculum Sacerdotale tells that knights fast their horses before battles in order to make them run faster, and then makes the spiritual argument: "And so, dere freendis, moste vs feede oure horsis, scilicet, our bodies, with liȝt metis at this tyme [i.e., Lent], that we mowe rynne the better ayeyns the devel."[75] The Book of Vices and Virtues says that Wisdom teaches, among other things, "mesure in appetite and in will of desires, þat men and wommen ne lache not þe bridel to moche to renne to habundauntliche to alle desires of þe flesche ne to þe couetise of þis world."[76] The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man maintains that sensuality will not be bridled;[77] and Beryl Rowland

has found a similar, though much earlier image of the Ormulum: "Son se gluterrnesse iss daed, / Sone iss þe bodiȝ bridledd,"[78] and in "A Tretyse of Gostly Batayle": "Like as one horse welle taught bereth hys mastere ouer many peryls and saueth hym fro perysshyng, so the body well-rewled bereth the soule ouer many peryllys off thys wrecched worlde."[79]

The horse and rider image has proven helpful in interpreting less strictly religious and even secular texts. Mary Philippa Coogan has found the image in Mercy's address to Mankind, where it is "appropriate in the body-soul context in which it appears":

> Yf a man haue an hors, and kepe hym not to hye,
> He may then reull hym at hys own dysyre:
> Yf he be fede ouer well he wyll dysobey,
> And in happe caste his master in the myre.[80]

In Troilus and Criseyde, "Troilus is the prancing carthorse. . . subject to the dictates of passion," as Rowland notes the correlations between Troilus' love and his appearance on his horse; and "both Troilus and the Wife of Bath are compared to the blind, blundering horse to be restrained by the riders."[81]

The image also appears in the crucifixion scene in the Towneley Plays, where the soldiers mock Christ by pretending to prepare him for a tournament:

> Primus tortor. In fayth, syr, sen ye callyd you a kyng,
> you must prufe a worthy thyng
> That falles vnto the were;
> ye must lust in tornament;
> Bot ye sytt fast els be ye shentt,
> Els downe I shall you bere.
>
> Secundus tortor. If thou be godys son, as thou tellys,
> Thou can the kepe; how shuld thou ellys?
> Els were it meruell greatt;
> And bot if thou can, we will not trow

That thou hase saide, bot make the mow
when thou syttys in yond sett.

iijus tortor. If thou be kyng we shall thank adyll,
ffor we shall set the in thy sadyll,
ffor fallyng be thou bold.
I hete the wel thou bydys a shaft;
Bot if thou sytt well thou had better laft
The tales that thou has told.

iiijus tortor. Stand nere, felows, and let se
how we can horse oure Kyng so fre,
By any craft;
Stand thou yonder on yond syde,
And we shall se how he can ryde,
And how to weld a shaft.

Primus tortor. Sir, commys heder and haue done,
And syt apon youre palfray sone,
ffor he [is] redy bowne.
If ye be bond till hym, be not wrothe,
ffor be ye secure we were full lothe
On any wyse that ye fell downe.[82]

Two of the ironies of the scene are that Christ's mission was necessary because of man's inability to restrain his carnality, and that Christ as horseman does indeed mount the souls of those who wish to conquer their own sinful impulses.

People in the late Middle Ages continued to talk of an inner and outer nature of man, and of an inner man and an outer man. Julian of Norwich wrote that there are "two sides of our nature, outward and inward," the inner being "superior to, and governor of, the outward."[83] Rolle uses the inner-outer man in a prayer:

> May the joy of true love reign in us always, and the cruel persecution of sensuality succumb forever! For although it offers its poisonous substance only to the outer man, and that but for a moment, nevertheless, it plunges his inner nature into foulness.[84]

The Pricke of Conscience says that clerks call men both inner and outer man:

Inner man onence þe saule anely
And utter man onence þe body.[85]

The inner and outer men are also found in the art of the period, such as in death scenes, where a small figure beside a larger corpse represents the departing soul.[86]

The natural images of the body-soul conflict thus remained uniform in the Latin and Middle English traditions. Images of light and dark, of fire, earth, and water, of ascent and burden, of sailor-ship, husk, thorn, swine, horse-rider, and inner and outer man appear in Middle English writings much as they had in earlier literature. The domestic images undergo some changes, though the most important images are generally stable. The image of the dwelling place becomes a castle; the vessel of the body is still frail; and the ladder, knife, and harmony between the soul and the body are still important ways of indicating man's moral choices and condition. The tomb image is not common, perhaps because the visit-to-the-tomb format and the image of the body as earth more dramatically pointed to man's weakness. The two most prominent images of the Latin tradition, the images of clothing and of husband-wife (and, often, lover) are still central to many flesh-spirit discussions.

The author of a twelfth-century sermon says that the soul is invisible, "and it supports all the body of itself and quickens it, the while that it is dwelling in the frame";[87] but usually the body as dwelling was specifically identified as a castle. Owst has traced the usage to the word castellum in the Vulgate account of Jesus' entry into the home of Martha: "Intravit Jesus in castellum" (Luke 10, 38),[88] and Roberta Cornelius has studied the body as a castle as "a species in

the genus of the bodily edifice."[89] In Sawles Warde, man is a castle with a husband (wit), a wife (will), their four daughters (the cardinal virtues), and servants (the senses).[90] The Ancren Riwle says that man as castle can also have inviting banners for the devil:

> Ease and the comfort of the flesh are the signs of the devil. When he sees these signs in a man or in a woman he knows that the castle is his, and where he sees such banners hoisted, like banners hoisted over a castle, he goes boldly in. In the people. . . [who have mortified their flesh] he finds these signs missing, and over them he sees hoisted the banner of God, that is, austerity of life.[91]

The Pricke of Conscience also identifies man's body with a castle.[92]

The soul in the body must be carefully protected, and the dwelling must have its entrances guarded. The Ancren Riwle advises the anchoresses to guard their speech and senses:

> The heart is well guarded if the mouth and eyes and ears are wisely kept, for these. . . are the guardians of the heart, and if the guardians go forth, the house is badly watched.[93]

In the Pilgrimage of the Life of Man, Pilgrim meets Mortification of the Body, who relates his unfortunate experience. He had been given a castle, but he had allowed his enemies to enter through the windows, and they had wounded him. Since then he has barred these entrances, and the Christian should likewise guard the windows of his body and hang banners of the cross from them.[94]

The vessel image appears in the Ancren Riwle in a passage on the uncleanness of the body: "Does there not come out of a vessel such stuff as is in it?"[95] The author denies that sweet savor comes from the "vessel of your flesh," which is rather "a vessel of filth." There are frequent references in Middle English literature to the frailness of the human condition, as in Jacob's Well, when a man considers his death,

"Whanne my soule partyth fro my body, þat is frele & brotyl."[96] The ladder image appears in Jacob's Well, where, after the pit of the body has been cleaned and repaired, the Christian is to ascend by the ladder of charity:

> Whanne þi welle is þus made wyth lyme & ston, þi soule muste haue a laddere to styin vp by, out of þi depe welle in-to heuen.[97]

A ladder is also seen in the Book of Vices and Virtues, the highest rung of which is Wisdom;[98] and in the Gesta Romanorum a clerk entering a magnificent hall by descending some steps represents "any covetous man, who sacrifices himself to the cupidity of his desires. The steps by which he descends are the passions."[99]

The image of cutting occurs in discussions of circumcision, which symbolizes the cutting away of carnality. The Speculum Sacerdotale says, "The spiritual circumcision is noȝt kittyng of only of oo synne, but of alle synnes. Iche man doyng dedely synne is vncircumcised, and the membres with the which he synneth are vncircumcised."[100] Mirk, in a sermon on the Circumcision of Christ, asks his listeners to think on each of the seven days preceding the Circumcision of the truths indicated by the circumcision--man is foul in his conception, death is to come, the parting of the soul from the body will be rueful, etc.:

> Anon þen he þat þenkyth bysely on þes seuen dayes, he schall be circumcyset yn þe ȝeght day, þat ys to say, he schall kytte away from hym þe lust of his flesche and worldes lykyng.[101]

We saw among the Latin writers a convention in which the soul was the player and the body a musical instrument, and harmony and dissonance indicated the proper or improper relationship between them. The positive relationship between the soul and the body is seen in an early

thirteenth-century exemplum by Jacques de Vitry.[102] A harmonious relationship has obviously existed between the soul and the body of a pilgrim who is now at the point of death:

> God sent his angels to console him and to bring back his soul by a painless death. The angel returned and said: "His soul will not leave his body." Then the Lord sent David to sing before the pilgrim with his harp. Then the pilgrim's soul, hearing the sweet sound, left his body with joy and delight.

It is clear that the soul loved the body and could leave only when it heard a more pleasing harmony. A less harmonious relationship has existed between the soul and the body in the Assembly of Gods, but Sensualyte and Reson finally agree when they meet Dethe:

> Wyche concordaunce nomore sygnyfyeth
> To pleyne understandyng, but in euery mane
> Both Sensualyte and Reson applyeth
> Rather Dethe to fle then with hit to be tane.
> Loo in that poynt accorde they holly thane.
> And in all other they clerely dyscorde.[103]

The symbolic value of clothing continued in the late Middle Ages. As the Book of Vices and Virtues states, "Clothing is the symbol of Adam's shame."[104] But clothing is also identified with the flesh, as when the author of the Ancren Riwle shows that St. Peter, St. Andrew, and St. Lawrence were wise in the contempt they showed for their flesh:

> They were like some cunning children of rich parents who deliberately tear their clothes to pieces so that they may have new ones. Our old garment is the flesh, which we have inherited from Adam, our progenitor. The new one we shall receive from God, our rich Father, at the resurrection on the Day of Judgement, when our flesh shall shine brighter than the sun, if it has been lacerated with misery and distress.[105]

When he talks about penance, the author commends an acquaintance who mortifies his flesh by wearing "at the same time a heavy coat of mail and a hair shirt fastened painfully about his waist, thighs, and arms

with broad, thick bands of iron."[106] Julian of Norwich interprets the coat which a servant in a vision wears as Christ's coat of flesh: "The white coat is his flesh; its being single, the fact that there is nothing separating Godhead and human nature; its tight fit is poverty, its age is Adam's wearing of it, its sweat stains Adam's toil. . . ."[107]

Flesh interpreted as clothing, or clothing as flesh, is seen in many exempla, such as one concerning Cosdras, King of the Athenians, who received an oracle that unless he was killed in the battle against the Dorians, the Athenians would be defeated. The Dorians heard the same oracle and instructed their soldiers not to kill the Athenian king; but Cosdras disguised himself, was slain, and thus insured victory for the Athenians:

> My beloved, thus did our blessed Lord, by the pre-determined counsel of God, die to liberate mankind from their worst enemies. As Cosdras changed his legal state for the humiliating garb of a servant, so did Christ put on mortality, and by his death triumphed over our demoniacal foes.[108]

In another tale a queen who has an illegitimate son by a servant forces the son to wear a garment composed of fine material on one side and cheap material on the other: "The worthless side of the garment is our fleshly substance, the other is the soul."[109]

The domestic imagery of the relationship between the body and the soul has of first importance the imagery of marriage and adultery, as it had in the Latin tradition. The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice had been interpreted by Boethius and others as representing mind and passion, respectively;[110] and a man-woman relationship is used by Deguileville in The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man, when the Pilgrim is told that his body is Delilah and he is Sampson.[111] Chaucer's Parson applies the husband-wife analogy to the process of sin in Adam and Eve as the Fathers had done:

There may ye seen that deedly synne hath, first, suggestion of the feend, as sheweth heere by the naddre; and afterward, the delit of the flessh, as sheweth heere by Eve; and after that, the consentynge of resoun, as sheweth heere by Adam. For trust wel, though so were that the feend tempted Eve, that is to seyn, the flessh, and the flessh hadde delit in the beautee of the fruyt defended, yet certes, til that resoun, that is to seyn, Adam, consented to the etynge of the fruyt, yet stood he in th' estaat of innocence.[112]

The union of the soul with Christ, and of Christ and the Church, was developed with the help of imagery of love and marriage. Thomas Ringstede declared in the fourteenth century that second marriages should not receive the blessing of the Church,

on account of the signification; for the union of a husband and a wife signifies the union of Christ and the Church, so that there should be one wife (the Church) and one husband (Christ). Thus when a woman accepts a second husband, she becomes one wife of two husbands, and the primary signification ceases.[113]

Erotic language and imagery is seen in several places in the literature of the Middle English period, as when Rolle addresses Christ:

Jesu my dearworthy lord; Jesu mine own father; sweet Jesu, heaven-king, my drury, my darling, my dearing, my loving, mine honeybird, my sweeting, mine heal and mine honeyter, mine honey-life, mine hallow, sweeter art thou than honey or milk in mouth, mead, meath, or piement made with spices sweet or any liking liquor that anywhere may be found. Who ne may love, Lord, thy lief lovesome leer? What heart is so over-hard that he may not to-melt in the meaning of thee, lovely Lord, and who may not love thee, sweet Jesu? For inwith thyself are all things gathered that ever may make any man love-worth to other. Fairness, lovesome leer, flesh white under shroud maketh many man be beloved and the more dear.[114]

The soul in the Wisdom Who is Christ kneels before Wisdom and professes his love,[115] and the Book of Vices and Virtues explains how the love which the Holy Spirit gives to men helps them align their wills with God's:

> For þe Holi Gost so bereþ hem vp to God and biclippeþ hem in so gret loue þat al here vnderstondyng, þat is here entente, al here wille, al here memorie, þat is al here þenkynge, al is turned to God. And þis loue and þis clippynge and þis desire is ioyned and oned so wiþ God in herte þat he may no þing willen but þat god wole.[116]

The Ancren Riwle cautions the anchoresses about protecting their love for God by secluding themselves. They should not follow after the goats, the desires of the flesh:

> "Thou my noble spouse," says our Lord, "Wilt thou follow the goats, the desires of the flesh to the field?" The field is the range of desires. "Wilt thou in this way follow the goats about the field?--thou who shouldst in the bower of thy heart ask me for kisses like my beloved who says in the Book of Love: "Let my lover kiss me with the kiss of his mouth, sweetest of mouths."[117]

As in the Latin tradition, fornication and adultery are still used as graphic descriptions of the process of sin. Rolle writes that the body should not be too generously gratified:

> Certainly this consolation of the body brings about the desolation of the soul when, having abandoned its true spouse, it opens its bosom so ardently to the fornications of devils.[118]

The Parson says of adultery, "Certes this is the fouleste thefte that may be, whan a woman steleth hir body from hir housbonde, and yeveth it to hire holour to defoulen hire; and steleth hir soule fro Christ, and yeveth it to the devel."[119] And a preacher says in a sermon composed after 1390, "Spirituall lecherye is whan þi soule, þat is Goddes spouse, doth lecherye by synne with þe devell of hell."[120]

Adultery illustrates sin again and again in the Middle English literature. The Gesta Romanorum has several stories of infidelity which illustrate man's moral struggle. One exemplum begins, "A certain emperor decreed that if any woman were taken in adultery, she should be cast headlong from a very high precipice."[121] The application is, "My beloved,

the emperor is God, who made a law that if any one polluted the soul (which is the spouse of Christ) by the commission of any mortal sin, he should be precipitated from a high mountain--that is from heaven; as befell our first parent Adam." Another tale about an unfaithful wife of a soldier and her gallant has the application that the soldier is Christ, the wife is the soul, and the gallant is the devil.[122] A third story about the unfaithful wife of a soldier who is aided in her sin by her mother is given a similar spiritual interpretation: "My beloved, the soldier is any man who is a wanderer in this world. The wife is the flesh; the mother is the world."[123]

As in the Latin tradition, the bedroom and the bed are significant. In one exemplum a brother and the sister he is charged by their father the Emperor to protect share a room but have separate beds. The brother eventually violates the girl; she bears a son who is sent into exile, later returns, and discovers his identity. The application is, "The emperor is Christ, who gave His daughter, that is, the human soul, to the charge of the brother, that is, the flesh. They lay in one chamber, that is, in one heart, or in one mind."[124] The bed image dominates the story. The girl is in "child-bed," the son is born of "an incestuous bed," and as a sign of his penitence he "direct[s] his bed to be made for him at the gate."[125]

The appearance of the husband-wife image for the spirit-flesh relationship in secular literature has been seen in the case of the Wife of Bath, who is "a literary personification of rampant 'femininity' or carnality."[126] But the soul as the spouse of Christ also appears in the death scene in Everyman, as Everyman descends into the grave:

Angel. Come, excellent spouse, to Jesu!
Hereabove thou shalt go
Because of thy singular virtue.
Now the soul is taken the body fro,
Thy reckoning is crystal-clear.[127]

The imagery of marriage and adultery is helpful as well for The Woman Taken in Adultery from the N-Town Cycle. In this play the Scribes and Pharisees catch an adulteress in her sin and bring her before Christ in an attempt to trap Christ by seeing if he will say that an adulteress should be given mercy, as they expect him to, or death, as the law demands. He quietly waits while they present the facts and ask for his judgment, and He replies simply:

Look which of you that never sin wrought,
But is of life cleaner than she;
Cast at her stones, and spare her nought,
Clean out of sin if that ye be.[128]

At this challenge her accusers are confounded and retreat. After they leave, Christ tells her only to go home and sin no more. Her sin is no different than any human sin:

What man of sin be repented,
Of God if he will mercy crave,
God of mercy is so abundant,
That what man ask it he shall it have.[129]

The traditional use of adultery to signify sin in general allows Christ to equate the sin of the adulteress with any other sin. The play becomes then not merely a recitation of an episode from the Bible, but a lesson in the nature of sin--fornication is not only the sin of the adulteress but of all men.

Having examined the most common natural images and domestic images of the body-soul relationship, we turn now to the public images which were frequently used in the Middle English period. Like the other

images the domestic images show the continuation of the traditional body-soul formulations. The images of the judge and of slavery have receded, but the prison is still a popular way of talking about the body. Chaucer's Parson quotes Romans 7, 24: "Alas, I caytyf man! who shal delivere me fro the prisoun of my caytyf body?"[130] And the author of the Ancren Riwle says that the soul is "in prison, shut in a torture-chamber."[131] The most powerful images of the body-soul struggle, however, are the images of the kingdom, king, rebellion, and war, which Middle English writers, like earlier writers, found to be vivid and dramatic analogues to man's moral struggle.

The author of the Ancren Riwle says that "the soul on earth is set in a foreign country [i.e., in the flesh]. . . . It is not seen as it will be in its own country." The flesh on earth is "at home" and is self-confident as "the cur is brave on its own midden."[132] Grace Dieu says virtually the same thing of the body--he is "in his own country, and everyone is bold on his own dunghill."[133] The Gesta Romanorum has a tale which names Heaven as the native home from which the soul is away.[134] It also affirms that the city in one tale can signify either heaven or the body.[135] The anonymous Crafte of Dying states that death for the virtuous man is nothing but the putting aside of a burden and the return to the native land:

> For the dede of gude men is nocht ell bot the pasing of personis Retwrnynge fra banysynge, offputyng of a ful hevy byrdinge, end of all seknes, eschevying of perellys, the terme of all Ill, the brekinge of all bandys, the payment of naturell det, the agane-cumynge to the kynde lande, and the entering to perpetuall Joy and welfare.[136]

With this image we are better able, I think, to appreciate the poem, The Land of Cockayne, which deals with the sins of the flesh--gluttony,

sloth, and lechery[137]—as it presents a wondrous kingdom of physical gratification. To get to the land, however, one must wade in swine's dung up to the neck:

> Whoso will come that land unto,
> Full great penance he must do.
> For seven years, as it is said,
> Through dung of swine he must needs wade,
> Sunk up to the very chin.
> Thus he may that land win.[138]

The point is that he who lives the carnal life described has enjoyed his bodily land at the expense of his heavenly one.

For Middle English writers the relationship between the soul and the body is described as that between a king and a servant and a mistress and a servant, but also between any lord and a subject. Governance and domination are commonly seen in the relationship between the soul and the body. When the soul of the Pilgrim is allowed to soar above its body in the Pilgrimage of the Life of Man, it is jubilant: "Hys gouernaunce I gan defye."[139] Rolle says that "the law of our physical nature" should give way to the divine law because "the carnal life dies within us as the spiritual life comes into domination."[140] And in The Wisdom Who is Christ, the author divides man's reason into a higher and a lower reason and says that "The ouerparte shall haue fre domynacion."[141] The five outward wits serve sensuality, the lower part of reason; and when they are not ruled properly, sin results.[142]

While The Cloud of Unknowing refers to sensuality as a power of the soul "rechyng & regnyng in þe bodely wittes,"[143] it also uses the body-soul duality: "Alle bodely þing is sogette vnto goostly þing & is reulid þerafter."[144] As the Fathers had done, later writers maintained

that a Christian could become a king by subjecting his flesh to his spirit:

> Bot note wele here that, when a man wyl not do euyl that the flesche couetez, ne has delectacyon in thoughtes of synne, bot wyth-standez hem, hauynge hem at dyspyte, than be thei purgacion and a coroune of his soule.[145]

The images of the king and subject are modified to the king and a pawn in a game of chess occasionally, as in Hoccleve's "Epistle of Grace Dieu":[146]

> Shame hath he þat at the cheker pleith
> Whan þat a powne saith to the kyng "chek mate";
> And shame it is, whan that the gost obeith
> Vnto thi flessh, þat schuld obeye algate
> Vnto thi goost.

The related image of mistress is also seen: "The soul is the mistress of the body, and it guides the five senses of the body as from a throne."[147]

The soul and body as lord and servant is quite common; and the relationship suggests, not necessarily a king, but any feudal lord to his vassal. It appears in an Old English riddle:

> I know of a most noble guest in the dwellings, hidden from men, whom fierce hunger cannot torment, nor burning thirst, nor age, nor sickness nor close-pressing death, if the servant who shall bear him company in his course serves him honourably: they, prospering, shall find abundance and bliss, countless joys, allotted to them at home, but they shall find sorrow, if the servant obeys his lord and master ill upon their journey. . . .[148]

In the Cloud of Unknowing we hear that before the Fall the imagination and sensuality were obedient servants of the will, but afterwards, they were not.[149] Mirk, quoting Paul, says that only by chastising can the body be brought into the service of the soul;[150] and the recalcitrance and rebelliousness of the subject and servant is seen in the Pilgrimage of the Life of Man:

> He was ordeyned for to be
> Soget & seruant vn-to the,

And tabyde in thy servyse.
But now ys tournyd al that guyse,
Pleynly, yiff thow lyst to se;
Ffor he hath now the souereynte,
Lordshepe & domynacioun,
That ffirst was in subieccioun.
And to concluden, at o word,
Thow art soget, & he ys lord.[151]

The rebellious nature of the flesh leads to the most dramatic images, constant throughout medieval literature, of rebellion and war. The soul that has been rebellious to God is punished by having a body rebellious to it:

> And therefore, thanne, for as muche as the resoun of man ne wol nat be subget ne obeisant to God, that is his lord by right, therefore leseth it the lordshipe that it sholde have over sensualitee, and eek over the body of man. And why? For sensualite rebelleth thanne agayns resoun, and by that way leseth resoun the lordshipe over sensualitee and over the body. For right as resoun is rebel to God, right so is bothe sensualite rebel to resoun and the body also.[152]

And again, "For as muchel thanne as the caytyf body of man is rebel bothe to resoun and to sensualite, therfore is it worthy the deeth."[153]

To many medieval writers, a state of war raged in man. The body is a "ful greet enemy to the soule";[154] and the soul "hast noon so mortal foo"[155] as the body, which is also "thy gretest aduersarye."[156] Mannyng says that we should expect to have to fight against fleshly lusts.[157] The Speculum Christiani quotes "Petrus" when it records the injunction: "I pray ȝou as straungers and pylgremes to absteyne ȝou fro fleschly desires that fyghten aȝeynste a mannys soule."[158] M. W. Smyth found that one of the "common words and phrases" from the Bible used before 1350 in England was I Peter 2, 11: "Vlesliche lustes þet weorreð aȝean þe soule."[159] The Pilgrimage refers to the "werre & strong bataylle" between the soul and the body and says that the soul must

conquer the body like a knight in a tournament:

> But yiff that thow (as yt ys ryht,)
> Dyscounfyte hym by verray myghte,
> And by force ber hym doun
> Lyk a myghty champyoun,
> Than shal-tow (both fer & ner,)
> Over hym han full power. . . .[160]

Later the Pilgrim agrees that he must attack his body, "play him at chess, and checkmate him; keep him low by abstinence, govern him by reason; and make him weak, sleep little, and flog him; make him pray, and do penance, and keep him in subjection."[161]

We have seen in the Middle English period most of the images of the body and soul which were used by Latin writers earlier in the Middle Ages. A few images have been modified--the body as earth is elaborated with horrifying vividness--a few, such as the image of the body as slave, have been dropped, and once in a while we see a new image added, such as the foul fruits of the body, the fleshly passions as canine animals, and the body and soul as pieces in a chess game. But generally the older images continue to provide graphic illustrations of the moral struggle. The soul is still the light which is shadowed by the body, the fleshly passions are still fiery, the body is still "watery" with its streams of passion and, as earth, a burden on the soul. Imagery from plant life, the body as chaff and the thorns of the prickly flesh, and from animal life, chiefly the swine and the horse, and the image of the inner and outer man remain alive. Domestic images of the dwelling, the vessel, the ladder, the knife, of clothing, and of husband-wife(-lover), and public images drawn from man's larger social relationships, such as the prison, the kingdom, the king or lord and subject, rebellion, and war are still easy references, by way of

the body and the soul, to man's moral life.

Now that we have accumulated these images, we need to answer a significant question. What evidence is there that anyone in the Middle Ages was aware of the images as a group? We know that writers used various traditional images, but where does a medieval artist show that he realizes he is working in a tradition of several images of the body and soul? A sixteenth century artist who seems to be aware of several body-soul conventions is Breugel, as I suggested in the first chapter. But an earlier work, dating from about 1300 to 1350, which shows just such a systematic understanding of the body-soul images is the _Debate Between the Body and the Soul_.[162]

The importance of the imagery for understanding the _Debate Between the Body and the Soul_ was suggested twenty-five years ago by Mary Ursula Vogel, who investigated the horse-and-rider image and pointed to others:

> By means of the horse-and-rider analogy, together with the metaphor of the servant and master and other related images, the poet concretizes the activities of the flesh and its betrayal of the soul. . . .[163]

More recently Robert W. Ackerman has examined the didactic literature of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in England to find in the poem "a series of images and formulations of a distinctly popular, vernacular cast."[164] These images,

> comprise allusions to the practice of witchcraft, to symbols of the pride of life, to the world, the flesh, and the devil, to Matins, Mass, and Evensong, to fake executors, to the need for confession, and to the hideousness of the rotting corpse.

No one, however, has fully studied the traditional images of the body-soul metaphor of the moral struggle found in Latin and Middle English literature which the poet has included in the poem. By bearing

in mind the images which we have discovered, we can see that the author of the poem keeps constantly before us the issue of man's moral condition as seen through the body-scul images. While the vision is set in time after the moral conflict is past for the dead knight, it is still very much alive for the dreamer and the audience. The poem achieves a remarkable didactic power through the images of light and dark, fire, earth, burden, water, thorn, horse and rider, inner and outer man, dwelling, knife, tomb, clothing, husband-wife and adultery, judge, prison, master-servant, rebellion and war or fighting. The poet uses the traditional body-soul images to add resonance to the central conflict which he is describing and to refer to the many ways in which man views his moral life as a struggle between fleshly and spiritual impulses.

The first eight-line stanza of the poem has two principal images--of lying, both in bed and on a bier, and of darkness and light. The persona who narrates the vision is lying in bed, in a <u>droupening</u>, or pensive, depressed mood, and has a vision of a body on a bier:

> Als I lay in a winteris nyȝt
> In a droupening bifor þe day,
> forsoþe I sauȝ a sely syȝt
> A body on a bére lay,
> Þat havede ben a mody knyȝt
> And litel served God to pay;
> Loren he haved þe lives lyȝt,
> Þe gost was oute and scholde away.[165]

The narrator is lying in bed at night, before the day; and he sees the body of a knight on a bier without the light of its soul. The last line of the first stanza introduces the image of the inner man, the <u>gost</u>, who is now <u>oute</u> and ready to depart.

Such an incorporation of the soul is necessary so that the spiritual

gost can be acted upon by the devils later in the poem, but the spirit as an inner man is also a traditional way of understanding the soul. In any event, the soul pauses as it leaves the body: "It biwente and withstod,/ Biheld the body þere it cam fro" (48, 6-7), and the dialogue begins. The inner man, or soul, conscious of the fate that an evil life has brought upon them, is in a sorrowful mood; and it taunts the body with charges that the body is responsible for their present condition, contrasting the present stillness with the former activity of the body:

> Wreche body wȝy list ou so
> þat ȝwilene were so wilde and wod. (11, 12)

The soul continues the taunt, pointing to the reversals in the former life as well as now:

> Þou þat were woned to ride
> Heyȝe on horse in and out
> So kweynte kniȝt ikuð so wide. . . . (13-15)

The horse which should have been reined in by the soul has itself been the horseman, riding in pride.

The body, the clothing of the soul, has also enjoyed rich clothing in the past, and it has now been stripped from him:

> Ȝwi list ou þere so bare o side
> Ipricked in þat pore schroud?
>
> Ȝuere ben þi wurthli wedes. . . .? (19-21)

The first reference to a thorn is included in the pun on Ipricked, as pricked and as clothed, and the poet will return to this image later. The poet also associates the activities of the body with animals. The body was accustomed to ride on his horse, "As a lyun fers and proud" (16). He had proud palfreys and steeds (23), falcons (25), and hounds (26).

The soul is merciless in his protracted taunt:

> Ȝwere been þi castles and þi toures,
> Þi chaumbres and þi riche halles
> Ipeynted with so riche floures,
> And þi riche robes alle?
> Þine cowltes and þi covertoures,
> Þi cendels and þi riche palles?
> Wreche, ful derk is nou þi bour;
> Tomoruwe þou schalt þerinne falle. (49, 1-8)

Again the reversals are used to suggest the moral failings in the former life with the help of body-soul images. The body, the castle and dwelling-place of the soul, formerly had its own rich dwelling; and tomorrow it will have only the grave. The body, the clothing of the soul, had rich robes; the bed of the soul had quilts and covers; the body, the dark habitation of the soul, formerly had candles; but now it will have a dwelling "full derk."

Gone also are the cooks who prepared foods which smelled sweet (ll. 9-11) and which the body insatiably ate, or rather <u>frete</u> (l. 12), like an animal. The foul flesh swelled and became a banquet for the worms: "þat foule wormes schulden ete" (l. 14). The body at this point begins a counterattack: I was left in your care, and I only knew evil from good as you taught me (ll. 17-24). The body protests that he was intended to be the servant of the soul, "Set to serven þe to queme/ Bothe at even and at morn" (ll. 25-26), and that the soul, as one capable of judgment, should have foreseen the body's folly:

> Þou þat dedes couþest deme
> Scholdest habbe be war biforn
> Of mi folye, as it seme. . . . (49, 29-50, 1)

The soul interrupts the body's speech and addresses him condescendingly as one who "list þer bollen as a bite," or swollen as a bottle. The body has been swollen by the moisture of lust, far from the ideal of

dryness of "a leather bottle in the frost." The body as earth is going to lie "roten in þe clay" (l. 12) and, as earth, will "blowen with þe wind away" (l. 14). They will be reunited at the last day, when they come to court to be judged (ll. 15-18).

The soul complains that every time he wanted to teach the body something, the body became a defiant steed:

> Wiþ þi teþ þe bridel þou lauȝt,
> Þou dist al þat I þe forbed. (ll. 21-22)

The soul fought with the body: "Inouȝ I stod ageyn and fauȝt," but the body followed his own course (ll. 25-26). When the soul tried to tame (the word itself suggests domestication of a wild animal) and teach the body, the body "renne about and breyde wod" (ll. 27-30). When the soul tried to discuss soulenedes, the body was occupied with other things, such as enjoying the soulless life of "wode and water and feld" and perpetrating injustices at court: "Or to court to do men wrong" (ll. 9-10). Now that the body is dead, peace has returned to the animals which the body formerly hunted.

> Nou mowe þe wilde bestes renne
> And lien under linde and lef,
> And foules flie bi feld and fenne,
> Siþen þi false herte clef. (ll. 21-24)

The royal court as both the center of royal power and the seat of justice points to the moral condition of the dead knight--he lacked a sufficiently strong soul to subjugate his body and a sufficiently wise soul to judge between right and wrong. The image of the royal court and lordship remains, as the soul tells how easy it is for a servant to be unfaithful:

Ho may more trayson do
Or his loverd betere engine,
Þan he þat al his trist is to,
In and out as oune hyn? (ll. 13-16)

The servant, trusted to move freely about, can easily ensnare his lord, as the body can work treason to the soul through acts of rebellion.

The soul next refers to the body's past life as a lover, and the allusion is more than a colorful memory of an adulterous knight. The adultery is another image of the moral struggle, and it is symbolic of the knight's weakness:

Ne nis no levedi briȝt on ble,
Þat wel were woned of þe to lete,
Þat wolde lye a niȝt bi þe
For noȝt that men miȝte hem bihete.
Þou art unsemly for to se,
Uncomli for to kissen swete. (52, 1-6)

The appearance of the bright levedi, of lying together at night, of kissing, recalls the widespread use of adultery to suggest a victory of the flesh over the spirit. The knight is to be damned in part because he has been an adulterer, but he is also to be damned because through sin he has committed spiritual lechery.

The body protests that the soul is erring in laying all the guilt on him (ll. 10-11). The body says that he was always under the eye of the soul (ll. 13-15) and that he carried the soul around following the soul's urgings:

Wedir I ede up or doun,
Þat I ne bare þe on my bac,
Als þin as fro toun to toun,
Als þou me lete have rap and rac.

This is not a simple horse-and-rider image. The body is not a horse, but an ass; and he sees himself as a beast of burden, bearing the soul on his back, suffering the goading of the soul. There is a curious

reversal, as he claims that the soul was a burden to him, rather than that he was a burden of the soul. The soul, moreover, concedes that he was really something to be borne and that he did not have the necessary appendages for self-movement:

> Abouten, bodi, þou me bar;
> Þou mostest nede, I was wiþoute
> Hand and fot, I was wel war.
> Bote as tou bere me aboute
> Ne mizt I do þe leste char. (53, 12-16)

In this context, the soul does not consider himself to be a horseman, but a helpless burden, and the devils will treat him as such later in the poem.

The body says that he would have been better off if he had been only a beast, that is, if he had not had the companionship of the soul, because if he had been dumb, like a sheep, or a ewe, or a swine which lived for eating, drinking, and sleeping, at his death he would have been excused from eternal torment (53, 3-6). He would not have had to rise above bestial behavior and become human, managing other beasts and knowing Christian truths, and in turn being held responsible for his life, if it had not been for the intelligence of the soul:

> Nevere of catel nome kep,
> Ne wyste wat was water ne wyn,
> Ne leyn in helle þat is so dep,
> Ne were þe wit þat al was þin. (II. 7-10)

The wit which the soul was supposed to have had, however, was deficient. The soul confesses that he loved the body so much that he did not discipline it. He sounds like a doting husband, afraid of losing his wife:

> Softe þe for love I ledde,
> Ne dorste I nevere do þe wo;
> To lese þe so sore I dredde,
> And wel I wiste to get no mo. (53, 23-26)

The soul has lavished all his love on the body, again like a too-fond husband:

> I saw þe fair on fleysch and blod
> And al mi love on þe I kest;
> Þat þou þrive me þouȝte god,
> And let þe haven ro and rest. (54, 5-8)

The affection, however, only made the body "stirne of mod" (l. 9). The soul gave up the attempt to "fiȝte with þe," believing it was futile, since the body bore him "in þi breast." The image is of the inner-outer men, but it is also one of embrace, in which the soul loves the body too much to fight against it.

The soul later begins to weep for the too-great love he has foolishly given the body:

> Tho bigan þe gost to wepe,
> And seide, "Bodi, allas, allas,
> Þat I þe lovede evere ȝete,
> For al mi love on þe I las
> Þat tou lovedest me þou lete,
> And madest me an houve of glas;
> I did al þat þe was sete,
> And þou my traytor evere was. (56, 9-16)

The image of clothing, the "houve of glas," and of rebellion by a "traytor" are subsumed to the larger image of a man giving a woman too much love and being rewarded in return with falseness by her.

In loving his body too much, the soul also reversed the lord-servant relationship:

> I þolede þe and dide as mad
> To be maister and I þi cnave. (54, 27-28)

> For love þi wille I folewede al,
> And to min oune deth I drouȝ,
> To foluwe þe þat was mi þral,
> Þat evere were false and frouȝ. (57, 27-30)

While not denying that he was false and fickle, the body does object that

it is unfair to say that he made the soul his thrall. The body claims that he never did anything without the thought coming first to the soul (54, 29-55, 6). The body claims that the soul never disciplined him--the soul was easy, thin-witted, and "writhing," or changeable (ll. 27-30). The soul also knew that it was the nature of the body to sin, but he never disciplined him (56, 5-6). The soul replies that the body was a <u>traytor</u> (l. 16) and that the world, flesh, and devil were "þre traytours" (62, 19). The language is of the kingdom, as it is when the soul says that the devil "Was in us as is a spie" (56, 19).

The soul again cites the failings of the body as failures symbolized by rich garments and by riding a horse:

> Ȝwan I bad te leve pride,
> Þi manie mes, þi riche schroud,
> Þe false world þat stod biside,
> Bad þe be ful quoynte and proud;
> Þi fleysch with riche robes schride,
> Nouȝt als a beggare in a clout,
> And on heiȝe horse to ride
> Wiþ mikel meyne in and out. (57, 3-10)

The soul uses an image of a knife and of cutting to say that the world, flesh, and Devil had destroyed him: "Ye ladde me wiþ ȝoure enprise/ As þe bochere doþ his schep" (ll. 17-18). They led him like an ox to the slaughter:

> Ȝe ledde me bi doune and dale
> As an oxe be þe horn,
> Til þer as him is browen bale
> Þer his þrote schal be schorn. (ll. 23-26)

These images of sheep and ox about to be killed with a knife like sacrificial animals point to the inverted moral condition in the knight's life. He did not make his body a "living sacrifice to God"; but on the contrary the body sacrificed the soul to his own pleasures.

We have seen that the image of the soul as judge was present in the Latin, patristic tradition, but not common in Middle English literature. The poet of the Debate, however, seems to be aware of the metaphor. The body and soul look forward gloomily to the judgment and the court of Heaven (50, 15-18), but the role of judging is not only God's function--it is also man's. The soul looks not so much to God's judgment, but to man's inability to describe the horrors to come; and the soul uses an image of judges sitting in judgment:

> Þeiz all þe men nou under mone
> To demen were sete on benche,
> Þe schames þat us schullen be done
> Ne schulden halven del biþenche. (58, 5-8)

These men judging the extent of the horrors simply point to the failure in the judgment of the soul. Judgment is combined with the image of the body as dwelling as the soul says that he may no longer dwell, because he hears the hellhounds, but that the body will meet him again, "A domesday to wone with me" (59, 30).

Animal imagery appears in the hellhounds (58, 11; 59, 25) and fire in the burning of hell which the body foresees (58, 27). The body also wishes he had remained earth, or at least that at his birth he had been taken from his mother and cast into the earth (11, 18-19), or had "leizen and roted in a lake" (58, 18-20). A parody of a chariot drawn by horses appears in the soul's expression of despair: "Nou þe wayn is atte zate" (59, 1). The soul returns to the image of marriage, this time pointing to the absence of mates, which of course is the condition of the soul and the body:

> Þey alle þe men þat ben o lyve
> Weren prestes, messes for to singe,
> And alle þe maidenes and þe wyve
> Wydewes, hondene for to wringe,

And miȝte sweche fyve
Als in werld of alle þinge,
Siþin we ne mouwen us ȝelven schrive,
Ne schulde us into blisse bringe. (ll. 15-22)

The masses of the celibate priests, the lamentations of maidens and widows are of no avail. The body and soul cannot be brought to the bliss of heaven, just as the bliss of their marriage has been destroyed.

With the entrance of the fiends, "A þousend develene and ȝet mo" (60, 9), the action becomes frenzied; but the symbolism of the scene is determined in large part by the images of the body-soul relationship. The devils themselves are hideous, "with brode bulches on here bac," and with tails and claws. The humps on their backs suggest burdens which they are carrying, and their bestiality is apparent. They first make the soul drink a chalice of hot lead, and then they thrust a glowing colter through his heart (60, 17-24), both actions symbolizing and punishing the fires of passion. The colter, as a knife or as a plow, is a cutting instrument either of flesh or of the body as earth. The devils put glowing gleyves, or swords, all around the soul and then thrust them into his heart:

Þat in his herte þe poyntes mettin,
And maden him þo woundes wide. (ll. 25-28)

The imagery of fire and heat is now combined with clothing images as the devils mock the knight's love of fine clothing:

Worþli wedes for to were
Þei seiden þat he lovede best:
A develes cope for to bere
Al brennynde on him was kest,
With hote haspes imad to spere
Þat streit sat to bac and brest. (61, 3-8)

An interesting thing about the cope is that it is made like a chest, a close-fitting enclosure with hasps for locking.

The soul of the knight is also provided with a helm and a horse, of sorts, as he is prepared for a tournament. He receives a devil for a mount and a bridle which is gleaming--with light and heat--and the devil is saddled. The saddle is "fol of scharpe pikes schote,/ Alse an hechele on to ride" (61, 15-17); and it, too, is glowing. The hechele was a brush with metal spikes for combing flax, and the pricking that the soul will receive as he rides is reminiscent of the pricks of the flesh as thorns of the soul. The soul is now put on the devil, "As he scholde to þe tornement" (61, 20); but the image is not so much of a knight mounting a horse, as a load being put on a beast of burden: "Upon þat sadil he was sloungen" (l. 19). More images of heat and thorns appear as the soul with "hote speres þoruȝ was stongen/ And wiþ oules al torent." With every stroke the sparks flashed "as of a brond þat were forbrent" (ll. 25-26).

Throughout the poem, the body has been associated with animals. The knight hunted them and the body is blamed for the knight's penchant. The body wishes that he had been born an animal rather than a body. Now the soul is treated in a way which reminds us that he, too, was responsible for behavior which was rather bestial than human. Just before the devils come, the soul tells the body that he may no longer dwell, "Ne stonde for to speke with þe" (59, 24). The word stonde has the double meaning of standing and waiting, and, in the former sense, the soul will soon no longer be able to stand erect as men do. He is transformed into a toad:

> Ȝwan he hadde riden that rode,
> Upon þe sadil þer he was set,
> He was kast doun as a tode,
> And hellehoundes to him were let. (61, 27-30)

The dogs carry off the soul-turned-toad to hell, leaving a bloody track behind: "Men mizte of blod foluwe þe tred" (62, 4). The devils, as if to taunt him about the former superiority to animals that he has lost, "Beden him honten and blowen,/ Crien on Bauston and Bewis" (ll. 5-6).

When the devils bring the soul to the entrance to hell, we are reminded of the presence of the soul in the foul body, a theme popular in the Middle English period:

> Zwan it cam to þat wikke won,
> Þe fendes kasten swilk a zell,
> Þe erþe it openede anon,
> Smoke and smoþer up it wel;
> Boþe of pich and of brimston,
> Men mizte fif mile of have þe smel. (62, 13-20)

Hell, like the body before, is to be the soul's won, or dwelling, and like the body it exudes foul smells. After a protest about the justice of God's plan, the soul is shouted down and, in the dramatic end of the vision, he is thrown into hell like some kind of animal burden:

> Þe foule fendes þat weren fayn,
> Bi top and tail he slongen hit,
> And kesten it with myzt and mayn
> Doun into the develes pit,
> Þer sonne ne schal nevere be seyn;
> Hemself he sonken in þermit;
> Þe erþe himself it lek ageyn,
> Anon þe donge it was fordit. (63, 15-22)

The details continue to recall the body-soul relationship. The soul is thrown like a piece of baggage or an animal into the pit of hell, which is dark because the sun never shines there. And the earth closes upon the soul; but it is not simply the earth, or even hell, but a dungeon which locks up the incarcerated soul. The vision thus closes with a compact summary of the moral struggle, provided by four images of the body-soul relationship: the body as load upon the soul (here transformed into the soul as burden), the body as the darkness engulfing

the soul, the body as earth, and the body as dungeon or prison.

As the vision ends, before day, the dreamer thinks of "þat foule lod," the load or journey which he has just seen, and is terrified at what he has witnessed. He prays in fear and gratitude to Christ while he is still in bed, and he advises all men to shrive themselves and repent:

> Þo alle sinful I rede hem red
> To schriven hem and rewen sore;
> Nevere was a sinne idon so gret
> Þat Christes merci ne is wel more. (64, 5-8)

The poet's suggestion is that the dreamer and the audience have seen the moral struggle and its consequences persuasively presented in the Debate and that the experience of the "mody knyȝt" is a lesson to them all.

The Debate Between the Body and the Soul is a concise poetic statement about the nature of man's moral condition, seen through the model of the flesh-spirit conflict. The poem consists of a central verbal conflict between a soul and a body about to be separated and later damned; but in addition to the lively exchange, there is an imagistic undercurrent of variations of the conflict between the soul and body which keeps before us the continuing question of man's moral life. The knight is lost, but the dreamer and the audience can find in the images of light-dark, fire, earth, burden, water, thorn, horse and rider, inner and outer man, dwelling, knife, tomb, clothing, husband-wife and adultery, judge, prison, master-servant, rebellion, and war or fighting a brief warning on the importance of their moral choices.

The late Middle Ages brought a dissemination and popularization of

Christian doctrine to England. With the educational spirit came the need for vivid and simple formulations of Christian truths. The preachers, both regular and secular, would not only have found the body-soul conflict as a metaphor for the moral struggle in the writings of the Fathers and other writers of the Latin tradition, but they also would have recognized in it an effective tool for their own purposes. It is no surprise, then, that we see a continuation of the use of the body-soul images as graphic models for the moral struggle in religious and quasi-religious literature of the period. The boundary between religious and secular writings, however, is not so firm, as we will see when we examine a piece of literature which has generally been regarded as non-religious, the stanzaic _Morte Arthur_. In it, as in the _Debate Between the Body and the Soul_, we will see the moral struggle presented with the help of the traditional images of the relationship between the body and the soul.

1. "_The Debate Between the Body and the Soul_ and Parochial Christianity," _Speculum_, 37 (1962), 564. This essay, to which I will return, is helpful for understanding the contributions of the religious instructional works to the body-soul debate form. But while Ackerman observes the basic metaphor and lists the appearance in the _Debate_ of issues, such as witchcraft, of concern to late medieval religious writers, he does not consider the traditional images of the body-soul relationship.

2. _Ibid._, 545. The instructional motive produced manuals for the clergy, such as Friar Lorens' _Somme le Roi_ of 1279, which was translated in 1340 by Dan Michael as the _Ayenbite of Inwyt_ and towards the end of the century as the _Book of Vices and Virtues_. While these manuals and such works as the _Ancren Riwle_ and the _Speculum_ of St. Edmund Rich were intended for the instruction of the religious, they nevertheless were used by others for private devotion and study and attained a wide audience. For the history of the instructional efforts in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see Margaret Schlauch, _English Literature and its Social Foundations_ (Warszawa, 1956), pp. 191-96, and Robert W. Ackerman, _Backgrounds to Medieval English Literature_ (New York, 1966), pp. 80-101.

3. D. W. Robertson, Jr., "Frequency of Preaching in Thirteenth-Century England," _Speculum_, 24 (1949), 388.

4. "_Debate_," 545-46.

5. _The Popular Sermon of the Medieval Friar in England_ (New York, 1937), p. 3.

6. _Ibid._, pp. 4-5.

7. G. R. Owst, _Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England_, 2nd ed. (New York, 1961), pp. 185-86.

8. _Treatise on Preaching_, trans. The Dominican Students, Province of St. Joseph, ed. Walter M. Conlon (London, 1955), p. 35.

9. "Frequency," 377.

10. _Literature and Pulpit_, p. 2.

11. _Speculum Christiani: A Middle English Religious Treatise of the Fourteenth Century_, ed. Gustaf Holmstedt, EETS, 182 (London, 1933), p. 68.

12. "Frequency," 377.

13. _Ibid._

14. _Literature and Pulpit_, p. 5.

15. _Treatise on Preaching_, p. 32.

16. _Pilgrimage of the Life of Man_, Part II, ed. Katherine B. Locock, EETS, ES, 92 (1904), pp. 276, 278-79.

17. _Ibid._, p. 279.

18. Robert Mannyng of Brunne, _Handlyng Synne_, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, EETS, 119 (1901), p. 240.

19. _Gesta Romanorum_, trans. Charles Swan, rev. Wynnard Hooper (London, 1891), p. 75.

20. _The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer_, 2nd ed., ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston, 1957), p. 237, ll. 346-47.

21. _Ibid._, p. 255, l. 841.

22. _Jacob's Well_, ed. Arthur Brandeis, EETS, 115 (1900), p. 2.

23. _Pilgrimage_, p. 269. Cf. also the Parson's comment that venial sins, though small, can lead to damnation just as small drops can

drown a ship just as surely as a big wave can. (*Works*, p. 238, ll. 362-65).

24. *Middle English Sermons*, ed. Woodburn O. Ross, EETS, 209 (1940), p. 95. The sermons in this collection are from the period 1378-1417 (cf. pp. xxxiv-xxxvi).

25. *Twelfth Century Homilies in MS. Bodley 343*, ed. A. O. Belfour, EETS, 137 (London, 1909), p. 125.

26. *The Ancrene Riwle*, trans. M. B. Salu (London, 1955), p. 59. This translation is based on the Corpus MS, *Ancrene Wisse*, which dates from the first quarter of the thirteenth century (cf. pp. xxiii-xxvi).

27. *The Contra Amatores Mundi of Richard Rolle of Hampole*, ed. and trans. Paul F. Theiner (Berkeley, 1968), p. 156.

28. Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, trans. Clifton Wolters (Baltimore, 1966), p. 190.

29. *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, p. 275.

30. *Ancren Riwle*, p. 61.

31. *Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays*, ed. A. C. Cawley (New York, 1959), p. 14.

32. Huizinga notes that an unusual fact about late medieval attitudes toward death is that the visual arts dwelt on the topic of decay in a way that they had not before:

> Ascetic meditation had, in all ages, dwelt on dust and worms. The treatises on the contempt of the world had, long since, evoked all the horrors of decomposition, but it is only towards the end of the fourteenth century that pictorial art, in its turn, seizes on this motif.

J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (London, 1924), p. 126.

33. *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century* (Oxford, 1924), p. xxix.

34. Theodore Spenser, *Death and Elizabethan Tragedy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1936), p. 32. Cf. Mary Catherine O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well: The Development of the Ars Moriendi*, *Columbia University Studies in English and Comparative Literature*, 156 (New York, 1942), pp. 1-3. O'Connor maintains that the *ars moriendi* book was not intended to frighten the reader, but that the reader was to be "reminded of the pity and the mercy of God, which is above all wickedness" (p. 5). Huizinga divides "the endless complaint of the frailty of all earthly glory" into three manifestations:

> Three motifs may be distinguished. The first is expressed by the question: Where are now all those who once filled the world with their splendour? The second motif dwells on the frightful spectacle of human beauty gone to decay. The third is the death-dance: death dragging along men of all conditions and ages. (Waning, pp. 124-25)

35. The Waning of the Middle Ages, p. 126.

36. The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages (Oxford, 1968), p. 311.

37. Speculum Sacerdotale, ed. Edward H. Weatherly, EETS, 200 (London, 1936), pp. 56-57.

38. Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays, p. 207.

39. Erthe upon Erthe, ed. Hilda M. R. Murray, EETS, 141 (London, 1911), p. 1.

40. Ibid., pp. 1ff., ll. 73-76.

41. The Pricke of Conscience: A Northumbrian Poem by Richard Rolle de Hampole, ed. Richard Morris (Berlin, 1863), p. 11, ll. 387-89.

42. Ibid., p. 16, ll. 563-65.

43. Ibid., p. 18.

44. Ibid., pp. 24-25, especially ll. 848-50.

45. Religious Pieces in Prose and Verse, ed. George G. Perry, EETS, 26 (1867, 1914), p. 18.

46. Pilgrimage, p. 25, ll. 9112-14.

47. Ibid., p. 253, ll. 9150-55.

48. John Mirk, Festial: A Collection of Homilies by Johannes Mirkus, ed. Theodor Erbe, EETS, ES, 96 (1905), p. 295.

49. Twelfth Century Homilies in MS. Bodley 343, p. 125.

50. English Religious Lyrics, p. 317ff.

51. Literature and Pulpit, p. 530.

52. English Religious Lyrics, p. 316.

53. Ibid., p. 312. For illustrations, see T. S. R. Boase, Death in the Middle Ages (New York, 1972), pp. 97, 100, 103.

54. BM Add MS 37049; English Religious Lyrics, p. 313.

55. Twelfth Century Homilies in MS Bodley 343, p. 129.

56. Pilgrimage, p. 262, l. 9500.

57. Speculum Sacerdotale, p. 232.

58. Ancren Riwle, p. 122.

59. Handlyng Synne, p. 270.

60. Ancren Riwle, pp. 122-23.

61. Pricke of Conscience, p. 18, ll. 645-59.

62. Creation of Adam and Eve, l. 22; Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays, p. 13.

63. The Cloud of Unknowing and the Book of Privy Counselling, ed. Phyllis Hodgson, EETS, 218 (London, 1944), p. 115. This work, whose author is unknown, was popular in the fifteenth century: it "walked up and down at deer rates" (p. lxxxii, n.).

64. Ibid., p. 113.

65. Psalm 48, 13.

66. Walter Hilton, The Scale of Perfection, trans. Gerard Sitwell (London, 1953), p. 64.

67. The Book of Vices and Virtues: A Fourteenth Century English Translation of the Somme Le Roi of Lorens de'Orleans, ed. W. Nelson Francis, EETS, 217 (London, 1942), pp. 90-91.

68. A Morality of Wisdom, Who is Christ, ed. F. J. Furnivall, EETS, ES, 70 (London, 1896), p. 144, ll. 135-38.

69. Speculum Christiani, p. 68.

70. Book of Vices and Virtues, p. 222. See also p. 68.

71. Scale of Perfection, p. 123.

72. Gesta Romanorum, pp. 60, 106, 199.

73. Religious Pieces, p. 111.

74. Gesta Romanorum, p. 173.

75. Speculum Sacerdotale, p. 56.

76. _Book of Vices and Virtues_, 274ff.

77. _Pilgrimage of the Life of Man_, p. 334.

78. _Ormulum_, ed. R. M. White and R. Holt (Oxford, 1878), I. 664. Cf. "The Horse and Rider Figure in Chaucer's Works," _UTQ_, 35 (1966), p. 247, and notes 5, 6.

79. _Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole and his Followers_, ed. Carl Horstmann (New York, 1896), II, 421. Rowland also has found a reference in Bromyard's _Summa Praedicantium_ to vices as the horses which a sinner rides. ("Ambulatio," _Summa Predicantium_ (Nuremburg, 1465), XIX, viii. "The Horse and Rider Figure," 258, n. 6).

80. _An Interpretation of the Moral Play Mankind_ (Washington, 1947), p. 29. Cf. II. 234-37.

81. "The Horse and Rider Figure," 252, 257.

82. _The Towneley Plays_, ed. George England and A. W. Pollard, EETS, ES, 71 (1897), p. 261.

83. _Revelations_, p. 93.

84. _Contra Amatores Mundi_, p. 156.

85. _Pricke of Conscience_, p. 157, II. 5846-47.

86. _E.g._, in BM Add MS 37049, reproduced in Woolf, _English Religious Lyrics_, p. 329.

87. _Twelfth Century Homilies_, p. 87.

88. _Literature and Pulpit_, p. 77.

89. Roberta Cornelius, _The Figurative Castle: A Study of the Edifice with Especial Reference to Religious Writings_ (Bryn Mawr, 1930), p. 73. Cornelius also writes:

> The conception of the soul as dwelling in the body led to the allegories of the soul and its wardens. The mystery of the incarnation and the worship of the Blessed Virgin gave rise to the comparison of the Virgin to an edifice: to the temple, to the House of Wisdom, to the Ark of the Covenant, to the castle.

90. _Sawles Warde: An Early Middle English Homily_, ed. R. M. Wilson, _Leeds School of English Language Texts and Monographs_, 3 (Leeds, 1938), pp. 246-47.

91. _Ancren Riwle_, p. 161.

92. Pricke of Conscience, p. 157.

93. Ancren Riwle, p. 45.

94. Pilgrimage, pp. 328-29. Ackerman, "Debate," 548, n. 37, has found additional references to the five senses as gateways to sin in Castel off Loue (Chasteau d'Amour or Carmen de Creatione Mundi) by Robert Grosseteste, ed. Richard Francis Weymouth, The Philological Society (1864), vv. 133ff.; Book of Vices and Virtues, pp. 178ff.; and Speculum Christiani, pp. 73-123.

When we note that the dwelling symbolizes the body, an irony appears in the Earth upon Earth poems when the body is in the grave, bereft of its former castles:

> Er erþe go to erþe, bild þi long bold.
> Erþ bilt castles, and erþ bilt toures;
> Whan erþ is in erþe, blak beþ þe boures.

Erthe upon Erthe, p. 3, ll. 63-66. Earth has foolishly built castles instead of a "long dwelling"; and now the room where it is, as well as the body, is black. Cf. also, "Þe rof is on þe chynne" (p. 1, l. 17), and a similar thirteenth-century lament from a body in the grave: "Thanne lyd mine hus uppe mine nose" (Medieval English Lyrics, ed. R. T. Davies (Evanston, 1964), p. 75, l. 21).

95. Ancren Riwle, pp. 122-23.

96. Jacob's Well, p. 221. Cf. also "Second Hymn to Jesus Christ" in Religious Pieces, p. 95: "And my frele flesche makes me blynde." (l. 95).

97. Ibid., p. 3.

98. Book of Vices and Virtues, p. 272.

99. Gesta Romanorum, p. 186.

100. Speculum Sacerdotale, p. 16.

101. Festial, p. 47.

102. The Exempla, or Illustrative Stories from the Sermones Vulgares, ed. Thomas Frederick Crane (London, 1890), p. 190.

103. John Lydgate, The Assembly of Gods: or the Accord of Reason and Sensuality in the Fear of Death, ed. Oscar Lovell Triggs, EETS, ES, 69 (London, 1896), p. 59, ll. 2010-15.

104. Book of Vices and Virtues, p. 286.

105. Ancren Riwle, pp. 160-61.

106. _Ibid._, p. 168.

107. _Revelations_, p. 148.

108. _Gesta Romanorum_, p. 76.

109. _Ibid._, p. 58.

110. John Block Friedman, _Orpheus in the Middle Ages_ (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970), p. 180.

111. _Pilgrimage_, p. 263.

112. _Works_, p. 237, ll. 329ff.

113. _In Proverbia Salamonis_ (Paris, 1515), fol. xc. Cited and trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr., _Preface to Chaucer_ (Princeton, 1962), p. 319.

114. _Later Medieval English Prose_, ed. William Matthews (New York, 1963), pp. 132-33.

115. _Wisdom, Who Is Christ_, p. 140, ll. 17ff.

116. _Book of Vices and Virtues_, p. 87.

117. _Ancren Riwle_, p. 44.

118. _Contra Amatores Mundi_, p. 156.

119. _Works_, p. 257, l. 878.

120. _Middle English Sermons_, p. 24.

121. _Gesta Romanorum_, pp. 6-7.

122. _Ibid._, pp. 121-22.

123. _Ibid._, p. 223.

124. _Ibid._, pp. 153-55.

125. _Ibid._, pp. 144ff.

126. Robertson, _Preface_, p. 321. See also pp. 320, 330.

127. _Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays_, p. 233, ll. 894-98.

128. _Ibid._, p. 140, ll. 229-32.

129. _Ibid._, p. 142, ll. 285-88.

130. _Works_, p. 237, l. 344.

131. Ancren Riwle, p. 62.

132. Ibid.

133. Pilgrimage, p. 276, quoting Furnivall's summary.

134. Gesta Romanorum, p. 20.

135. Ibid., p. 299.

136. Ratis Raving, and Other Moral and Religious Pieces in Prose and Verse, ed. Joseph Rawson Lumby, EETS, 43 (London, 1870), p. 1. The material in this collection is from about 1450.

137. Clifford Davidson, "The Sins of the Flesh in the Fourteenth-Century Middle English 'Land of Cokaygne,'" Ball State University Forum, II (1971), 21-26, maintains that the poem is not a utopian vision, but involves "wishes that must be controlled if one is to pattern his life upon the divine model." (26.)

138. Medieval English Verse and Prose, ed. Roger Sherman Loomis and Rudolph Willard (New York, 1948), p. 92, ll. 176-82.

139. Pilgrimage, p. 272.

140. Contra Amatores Mundi, p. 190.

141. Wisdom, Who is Christ, p. 149, ll. 293ff.

142. Ibid., p. 144, ll. 136-41.

143. Cloud of Unknowing, p. 118.

144. Ibid., p. 113.

145. Speculum Christiani, p. 72.

146. Thomas Hoccleve, Regement of Princes and Fourteen Minor Poems, ed. F. J. Furnivall, EETS, ES, 72 (London, 1897), p. xxvi, ll. 113ff.

147. Twelfth Century Homilies, p. 93.

148. Erthe upon Erthe, xxiv, n. 1.

149. Cloud of Unknowing, pp. 117-18.

150. Festial, p. 67.

151. Pilgrimage, p. 249, ll. 9011-20.

152. Chaucer, Parson's Tale, in Works, p. 234, ll. 264-66.

153. _Ibid._, pp. 234-35, l. 271.

154. _Ibid._, p. 241, l. 258.

155. _Pilgrimage_, p. 250, l. 9056.

156. _Ibid._, l. 9074.

157. _Handlyng Synne_, p. 270, ll. 8570-78.

158. _Speculum Christiani_, p. 28.

159. _Biblical Quotations in Middle English Literature Before 1350, Yale Studies in English_, 41 (New York, 1911), p. xix.

160. _Pilgrimage_, p. 262, ll. 9521-26.

161. _Ibid._, quoting Furnivall's summary.

162. O. F. Emerson, _A Middle English Reader_, rev. ed. (New York, 1915; rptd., 1960), who prints the Laud MS 108 version, dates the poem from the second half of the thirteenth century. Mary Ursula Vogel, _Some Aspects of the Horse and Rider Analogy in the Debate Between the Body and the Soul_ (Washington, 1948), p. 1, places it at the beginning of the fourteenth century with other manuscripts following: and Rosemary Woolf, _English Religious Lyrics_, p. 326, dates it at the "second half of the fourteenth century, with other manuscripts following in the next fifty years."

An important early study of the European and English body-soul debates is T. Batiouchkoff, "Le Débat de l'âme et du corps," _Romania_, 20 (1891), 1-55; 513-78. Three recent dissertations have dealt with the debates. Barbara Miller Perkins, "Þe Desputisoun Bitven þe Bodi and þe Soule, Edited from the Auchinlech Manuscript," Dissertation (University of Pennsylvania, 1972), discusses earlier English treatments, pp. 14-31, and "Philosophical Content and Background," pp. 79-119. Mary Heyward Ferguson, "The Debate Between the Body and the Soul: A Study in the Relationship Between Form and Content," Dissertation (Ohio State, 1965), deals in successive chapters with the Old English _Address_, the Royal _Debate_, _Un Samedi Par Nuit_, and _Noctis Sub Silencio_ and in appendices translates the Royal _Debate_, _Un Samedi Par Nuit_, and _Noctis Sub Silencio_. Mary De Costa Sugermon, "The Debate Between the Body and the Soul in Spanish Medieval Literature," Dissertation (Johns Hopkins, 1967), gives editions of three Spanish poems and presents "the ideology underlying the _Debate_ in Neo-Platonic-Augustinian philosophy and Judaeo-Christian ascetic theology," pp. 1-9, and the sources of the form, pp. 11ff.

Vogel, _Some Aspects_, pp. 1, 15-16, gives bibliographical data of the seven MSS. of the Middle English poem and the Old English

versions. A study which finds valuable formal connections with older literature, such as the Coptic Death of Joseph, is Louise Dudley, The Egyptian Elements in the Legend of the Body and Soul (Baltimore, 1911).

163. Some Aspects, p. 85.

164. "Debate," 551.

165. P. 47, l. 1-p, 48, l. 4 of Emerson's edition. I will be using this edition throughout, and I will refer to pages and lines in parentheses.

CHAPTER IV

THE BODY-SOUL IMAGES IN THE STANZAIC MORTE ARTHUR

In this study I have been interested in tracing one way in which writers and preachers of the Middle Ages simplified and dramatized the moral struggle. By reducing the moral decisions which the Christian made in life to the simple alternative of turning toward or away from God, by objectifying that decision through a conflict between the soul and the body, and by making the decision even more graphic and clear by casting the body-soul relationship in a series of images drawn from the full range of human experience, medieval thinkers found an effective model for the moral struggle. We have seen in Latin and Middle English literature of the Middle Ages a fairly stable tradition of images, and we have seen these images giving resonance to the Debate Between the Body and the Soul.

But my intention has also been to illustrate that the body-soul conflict and imagery had an effect on secular literature of the late Middle Ages. We would expect body-soul images to appear in a Debate Between the Body and the Soul, and when we do find them we know only that the poet is well-read enough and craftsman enough to elaborate his subject through the traditional imagery. A more inviting possibility is that the images were a part of the cultural fabric, that what people of the Middle Ages considered most suspenseful and of most critical importance was their moral condition and the eternal consequences of

their actions, and that when they reflected on these crucial matters they objectified their musings with the images which we have outlined. Laymen--including poets and readers--would have done what religious men had done for centuries and were still doing: they would have regarded man's moral condition as dramatic and suspenseful and visualized that condition by way of the traditional images.

In order to demonstrate that the body-soul images we have examined were so deeply embedded in the consciousness of the late Middle Ages as to be found in secular literature, I would now like to examine a poem of some 3900 lines which would seem on the surface to present its human conflicts in secular terms, the stanzaic *Morte Arthur*. The poem is a robust and economical summary of the central events of Arthur's legendary decline and fall, but until recently it has not been taken very seriously, except as a source of Malory's *Morte Darthur*. If we find the body-soul images pointing to the moral issues in the poem, we will enhance the possibility that this traditional *psychomachia* had a wider and more subtle social and literary impact than anyone has yet suggested.

The stanzaic *Morte Arthur* has generally been excused as a "minstrel romance." Jusserand set the stage for the minstrel, and for later indifference to minstrel romances, when he hypothesized a travelling minstrel, playing before a lord whose literary taste had been "palled by surfeit."[1] In order to please his lord the minstrel had to create increasingly complex plots with "harder and harder tasks" and "more and more marvelous enchantments" facing the hero. The resulting romance, while filled with action, was empty of thought:

> These poems are all cut after one and the same pattern, tripping and sprightly, with little thought and less sentiment: the cadenced stanzas march on, clear, easy, and empty; no constraint, no effort; one may open and close the book without a sigh, with no positive weariness nor really-felt pleasure.[2]

George Kane's judgment of the stanzaic Morte Arthur is only slightly more favorable. He describes it as a pleasant "setpiece," which "becomes a revisiting of tried, familiar regions of the fancy, where the response and the enjoyment are assumed by long and pleasurable association."[3] Robert Ackerman damns and then gives faint praise when he says that Le Morte Arthur is "marred by faults typical of the minstrel style,"[4] but "it tells a moving story vividly and swiftly."[5] And Roger Sherman Loomis sees the poem only as an unworthy predecessor of Malory's Morte Darthur:

> It is . . . [a] paradox that from this mediocre poem, full of stereotyped phrases, Malory derived some of his most memorable passages.[6]

A corollary of the contention that the minstrel composed his romance without much thought has been that the moral world of such a romance is confused and impossible to unravel. Kane, for example, says of Le Morte Arthur:

> The many contradictions inherent in the accumulated material of the Arthur legend confuse the issues so completely. . . that no moral point of view could be consistently maintained with regard to it.[7]

Dieter Mehl, who believes that "It would be easy to over-interpret" the romances which are the subject of his book,[8] sees the author winking at the relationship between Launcelot and Guinevere: "He accepts it as a fact whose origins he has no reason to inquire into and which it is futile to condemn."[9] Ackerman agrees that moral comment is not the author's concern:

> If a sense of Launcelot's moral obloquy--in particular, the hero's brazen assertion of innocence on the part of Guenevere and himself--ever crossed the English poet's mind, he resisted the temptation to criticize Launcelot or to bring the ethics of courtly love into question.[10]

However, Richard Wertime has recently taken issue with "the usual notion that the stanzaic Morte Arthur was composed as slipshod courtly entertainment by a professional, not overly serious, minstrel."[11] He points out the circularity of the argument:

> . . . since the form is typical of oral poetry, and since there is no manifest coherence of theme or structure, the author must have been a mere entertainer. And once this is decided, one need look no further for evidence of unity or seriousness of purpose.

An alternative to Jusserand's view of the minstrel has been outlined by A. C. Baugh, who reviews the evidence for minstrel authorship and concludes that minstrels did not necessarily compose their romances.[12] Instead, they performed (i.e., sang, recited, or read) the work of someone else.[13] Thus, a minstrel functioned much as an actor does for a playwright; and such formulas as "Lordynges, listen" can be explained as literary devices to enhance a live presentation.[14] The significance of Baugh's thesis is that we are encouraged to take the "minstrel romances" more seriously. If the poems began as written compositions, with authors giving more thought to word choice, organization, and the like, they deserve the same attention that other poems get; and what formerly might have been dismissed as formulaic tags must now be considered in relation to their effect on the poem.

The test of Baugh's thesis when applied to Le Morte Arthur is, of course, whether or not evidence of care and craftsmanship can be found in the poem. Is it or is it not well wrought? Wertime is one of the few scholars to believe that it is; and he calls the poem a "tragedy of

consequence," in which the characters act out their fate within the limits determined by the chivalric code:

> The forces of destiny are imbedded in the structure of chivalric society and in the natures of individual members, whose actions within the limitations of the accepted social code govern, almost entirely, the course of events.[15]

When we see that "the best of men are fallen creatures and commit misdeeds for which they will inevitably suffer," we must be sympathetic:

> In chivalric society, man's nobility is so entangled with his frailty that the spectator--in the person of the narrator--can only be moved to compassion. Since men cannot escape from tragic conflict even when redeemed by individual greatness, there can be no solution in this life. All one can do is minimize the pain of life either by withdrawing from its hazards, or by actively preparing for the next life--or by both.[16]

In Wertime's reading of the poem, the author is not only capable of seeing the tragic dimensions of the tale he is presenting, but also of trying to reduce Launcelot's culpability. While "it is a 'given' that Launcelot's adultery with Gaynor is the root cause of the destruction of Arthur's court," the poet uses several techniques to obscure his guilt. He praises Launcelot:

> At the outset of the poem all the characters agree, with conspicuous insistence, that Launcelot is not merely the greatest knight, he is the keystone in the well-being and survival of Arthur's court.

There is also "an implicit distinction. . . between the mere existence of the adulterous relationship and its exposure to the court." Those who would expose the lovers are presumably more wicked than the lovers:

> The fact of the affair is made to look rather innocent; we know little of its background, little of the lovers' motives, but what we do know suggests that both Launcelot and Gaynor are lovers without their entirely willing it.

And, finally, most of the blame for the turbulence in the kingdom is

passed from Launcelot to Gawayne: "The two undergo a reversal of primary roles by which Gawayne becomes the aggressor and Launcelot the placator."[17]

At the end of his essay Wertime admits that his study is "free of talk about contemptus mundi literature, though it points that way."[18] His main concern, he says, has been to remove the stigma associated with minstrel composition. In this way, Wertime has done scholarship a service--never again will the stanzaic Morte Arthur be shunned as an unworthy relative of the alliterative Morte Arthure and the Morte Darthur. But now it is time to look "that way."

It is difficult for me to believe that the narrator or a listener or reader of the late Middle Ages could watch the course of events in the poem without placing them in their moral context. What medieval writer or preacher ever talked about "the forces of destiny?" Who ever argued that chivalric man moves us to compassion because his nobility and frailty become so entangled that individual behavior cannot help to save him from mistakes? Who, in the Middle Ages, ever suggested that men are not responsible for their own deeds? To say that chivalric man is entangled is to beg the question, Who ensnared him? And the answer to this question is that man, always accountable for his actions, has ensnared himself. If this quintessential chivalric man is ensnared here, rather than man in general, then Le Morte Arthur is an indictment of the chivalric system. As for the poet's attempt to mitigate Launcelot's responsibility for the fall of the kingdom by his love affair with Gaynor, how is this really possible? I have noticed the affair, Wertime has, and no doubt most readers have as well. Surely the medieval reader would

have been keenly aware of it. Their affair and their responsibility are not hidden by making villains of those who would expose them. In order to understand the poem we must understand what reactions to it would be likely from a late medieval audience.

One reaction which the poem would receive would be one of simple delight in hearing of a grand and glorious period when knights lived by a code which now, in the late fourteenth century, they did not follow. Charles Moorman has summarized the judgment of historians that "the institution of knighthood was under attack from the twelfth century onward for not living up to its own ideals."[19] And R. L. Kilgore has seen in the real knights their "love of ease and luxury, their cowardice, their arrogance, and their plundering activities."[20] But while the knight in life might have been far from ideal, the knight in literature continued to shine, at least for the mass of chivalric romances:

> The great majority of the romancers presented, even in Chaucer's time, the idealized knight of popular tradition in the brightest primary colors. Proud, loyal, fearless, yet also devout, magnanimous, humble, merciful, courteous, and cultured. . . .[21]

The audience would have found much grandeur of this sort in <u>Le Morte Arthur</u>. For example, the poet and reader are very much aware of and enjoy Launcelot's role as the pride of the kingdom. Everyone at court is accordingly delighted when Launcelot returns after his first absence, and the reunion celebrates the love of the king and his knights and the brotherhood of the knights:

> The king stood in a towr on high,
> Besides him standes Sir Gawain;
> Launcelot when that they sigh
> Were never men on molde so fain,
> They ran as swithe as ever they might
> Out at the gates him again;

Was never tidandes to them so light;
The king him kissed and knight and swain.

To a chamber the king him led;
Fair in armes they gonne him fold,
And set him on a riche bed,
That spredde was with a cloth of gold;
To serve him there was no man sad,
Ne dight him as himselfe wolde
To make him both blithe and glad,
And sithe aunters he them told.[22]

We enjoy seeing the warmth among the king and his knights, and we are impressed by the genuineness of the brotherhood of the Round Table.

Another scene which is moving, this time from the pageantry of the occasion, is the moment when Launcelot brings the queen back to the king in order to prevent an interdiction of England. Launcelot is doing the magnanimous thing--subordinating his love for Gaynor to the welfare of the kingdom--and as he escorts her to Arthur's castle the scene is heavy with emotion:

Launcelot and the queen were cledde
In robes of a riche weed,
Of samite white, with silver shredde,
Ivory saddle and white steed,
Sambues of the same thred,
That wrought was in the hethen thede;
Launcelot her bridle led,
In the romaunce as we rede.

The other knightes everychone,
In samite green of hethen land,
And in their kirtels ride alone,
And iche knight a green garland;
Saddles set with riche stone;
Ichon a braunch of olive in hand;
All the feld about them shone;
The knightes rode full loud singand.

To the castle when they come
In the palais gonne they light;
Launcelot the queen off her palfrey nome;
They said it was a seemly sight.
The king then salues he full soon,
As man that was of muche might;
Fair wordes were there fone,
But weeping stood there many a knight.

Launcelot spake, as I you mene,
To the king of mikel might:
"Sir, I have thee brought thy queen,
And saved her life with the right,
As lady that is fair and sheen,
And trew is both day and night;
If any man sayes she is not clene,
I proffer me therefore to fight." (ll. 2356-87)

The nobility of Launcelot's gesture is mirrored in the elegance of clothing, in the attendant knights, and in the singing. We are impressed by the willingness of a knight so powerful as Launcelot to give up his beautiful lady for the welfare of England.

For many medieval readers, the Morte Arthur would have been therefore a splendid tale of nobility and adventure. However, if we look carefully at the poem, we will see that the poet is not satisfied with the surface charm of the tale he is telling. He has a probing mind, and he has left inducements for his readers, too, not to be content with the superficial luster of the narrative. For example, at the same time that the second scene is a bright pageant of apparent selflessness on Launcelot's part, a closer look reveals evidence of the poet's restlessness. He sets himself apart from the scene and with Launcelot's speech reminds us of the vast difference between courtly appearances and the moral truth. He stresses that he is reporting what he has found in another romance--"in the romaunce as we rede"--and he does not directly say that the scene is touching. Rather, he says, "They said it was a seemly sight." He also suggests that in spite of the courtesies of the meeting there is a profound awareness of what is not stated:

Fair wordes were there fone,
But weeping stood there many a knight. (ll.2378-79)

There is a cleavage between the words and the truth: it is a lie that

Gaynor "trew is both day and night."

Moreover, Launcelot is foolish and defiant at the same time that he is brave and courteous when he says he will fight anyone who says Gaynor is not clean. Launcelot is, to use Painter's categories, almost the epitome of the feudal knight and the courtly chivalric knight,[23] and his attempt to function as both feudal knight faithful to his lord and courtly knight, faithful to his lady, is a central tension of the romance and one cause of his failure. But the poet is doing more than pointing out the tragic incompatibility of these two ideals. He is also interested in man's moral condition. His examination of the relationships among Arthur and Gaynor and Launcelot shows that he is drawn to the drama of man's existence, specifically to the moral struggle as it was commonly presented through the conflict between fleshly and spiritual impulses. M. Amelia Klenke has examined the Arthurian legends found in liturgical art contemporary with Chretien to show that they could be vehicles of religious meanings,[24] and we will see that profound truths are being considered as well by the author of the stanzaic Morte Arthur.

The word allegory is too strong and rigorous to use here--we have Rosemund Tuve's warning, gathered from experience with Spenser scholarship, of the folly in rigid allegorical interpretations:

> An important reason for our rejection of the crowds of hobbled equivalents which oversubtle exegesis fixes upon Spenser, as upon other allegorical romance-writers, is that poets with such plans are impossible to conceive. Stories are imagined events taking place in time, and the imagination does not work in these ingenious dichotomies and well-contrived doublets, which we are to decode into an idea.

> It is hard to conceive of the state of mind of a writer who would try to convey that one attendant damsel with the Damsel of the Cart meant Historical Record, while her companion meant History in General. What experience shook him into a realization of this distinction, and supposing it struck him as vitally worth conveyance, would he have undertaken through a story in a romance to make this difference spring out upon us as the real and significant meaning?[25]

We must, Tuve insists, keep the poet in mind; and we are compelled to demonstrate the likelihood that he is pointing to a meaning beyond the narrative one. There is also something necessarily discontinuous about the presentation of secondary meanings. Of the Perlesvaus Tuve says, "It must be stated that the romance of itself encourages us rather to that general sense of a double meaning, that absence of equations which carry through, that flickering, intermittent clarity of the double senses. . . ."[26] It is this discontinuity of a more general meaning which allows the poet of the stanzaic Morte Arthur now to admire Launcelot's greatness and now to ponder on the real honour of Arthur and Launcelot.

That the poet is presenting more general meanings can be shown by the text itself. The author is constantly writing with "that flickering intermittent clarity of the double senses," as time and again he brings to our attention the moral questions, not just of Launcelot's relationship with Gaynor, but of the conflict between the carnal and the spiritual impulses. The poem is replete with traditional images of the relationship between the body and the soul which point to the larger issues of man's moral condition. Several general characteristics of the carnal life are evident in the poem. Among them are the absence of charity and the presence of pride, physical ease and richness of clothing and food, sexual promiscuity, and a high degree of violent activity and dependence on the body. But, more specifically, the

development of the poem is reliant on the images of the body-soul relationship: light and darkness, fire, earth, burden, water, ship and sailor, thorn, swine, horse and rider, castle, tomb, musical instrument, clothing, husband-wife-lover, judge, prison, kingdom, king-subject, lord-servant, rebellion, and war. The characters display the same development of wisdom which the souls display in the body-soul debates, realizing the folly of life conducted apart from God in self-gratification; and they eventually renounce their carnal lives for ascetic lives of spiritual fulfillment. The pattern of the poem is from fall to restoration, and Le Morte Arthur is as much about every man as it is about chivalric man.

The narrator begins his tale with two stanzas which function as a prologue, announcing that the matter is the ancestral past of England at a time when the kingdom was for a brief period peaceful and secure:

> Lordinges that are lef and dere
> Listeneth, and I shall you tell
> By olde dayes what aunters were
> Among our eldres that befell;
> In Arthur dayes, that noble king,
> Befell aunters ferly fele,
> And I shall tell of their ending,
> That mikel wiste of wo and wele.
>
> The knightes of the Table Round,
> The Sangrail when they had sought,
> Aunters they before them found
> Finished and to ende brought;
> Their enemies they bette and bound
> For gold on life they left them nought.
> Four yere they lived sound,
> When they had these workes wrought.

The first two stanzas are important in that they announce the theme as well as the subject of the poem. The subject of course will be a series of adventures, but the theme will be the acquisition of

understanding in the process of having those adventures: the poet is going to talk "of their ending,/ That mikel wiste of wo and wele." The narrator intends to tell of adventures "Among our eldres that befell," and of the knowledge of evil and good which came with their experience.

The second stanza is more specific about the recent past of the Round Table. The poet notes that the knights of the Round Table had recently finished their quest for the Holy Grail. Their last duties connected with that quest were the beating and binding of the enemies and the killing of the enemies, the latter a task for which they would not accept gold offered in ransom. A four-year period of peace has followed these adventures, and the action of the present tale begins in this time of peace.

After the prologue a carefully balanced scene (ll. 17-88) is of crucial importance for the development of the rest of the poem. We are introduced to the major characters, and in the juxtaposition of Arthur and Gaynor to Gaynor and Launcelot we see the foundation for a moral drama being laid. The first half of the scene explains how the peace of the kingdom was disrupted.

> Til on a time that it befell
> The king in bed lay by the queen;
> Of aunters they began to tell,
> Many that in that land had been:
> "Sir, yif that it were your will,
> Of a wonder thing I wolde you mene,
> How that your court beginneth to spill
> Of doughty knightes all bydene;
>
> "Sir, your honour beginnes to fall,
> That wont was wide in world to sprede,
> Of Launcelot and other all,
> That ever so doughty were in deed."
> "Dame, there to thy counsel I call:
> What were best for such a need?"

"Yif ye your honour holde shall,
A tournament were best to bede,

"For-why that aunter shall begin
And be spoke of on every side,
That knightes shall there worship win
To deed of armes for to ride.
Sir, lettes thus your court no blinne,
But live in honour and in pride."
"Certes, dame," the king said then,
"This ne shall no lenger abide."

And immediately the king calls a tournament. The three stanzas begin in quiet security, as the king and queen in bed remember adventures of the past, and end with the promise that the quiet will soon end.

The action has its beginning here as the idea of a tournament is born, and we look forward to more aunters of the sort suggested in the prologue. We are going to see which knights win worship, and we perhaps will see honour and pride gloriously present in Arthur's court once more. Since tournaments and martial prowess were acknowledged parts of the chivalric tradition, the promise of action might seem merely traditional.[27] But there is a serious counterpoint present in the prologue and in this conversation. We wonder how a poet could mention the quest for the Holy Grail and the beating, binding, and killing of the enemy in the same stanza without being aware of the irony. Likewise, I believe a reader might reasonably ask several questions about the conversation between the king and queen. Why should the queen feel that honor is falling in the kingdom? What more than the peace and security of the kingdom constitutes the real honor of a king? And is the search for worship and pride a worthy quest? While there would certainly be readers who would see the coming tournament as

exciting and worthy, would there not also be readers who would see the queen's desire for honor and the king's acquiescence as foolish and irresponsible? The poet has made provision for the sober reader. One of the truths which will be solidly established in the course of the poem is that indeed the pursuit of worldly honor is shortsighted and vain.

Let us consider the possibility that Arthur and Gaynor, who at their "ending" will know evil and good, are figures of human deliberation and moral choice. Gaynor, after all, opens the conversation by asking, "Sir, yif that it were your will. . . ." The possibility is increased when we recall that a common way of explaining the matter of moral choice among religious writers throughout the Middle Ages was by the analogy of a man turning to his feminine, sensual nature. We should also note that this husband is a king, another image of the soul; that the discussion is about the kingdom, another image of the body; that knights "stiff on steed" are to be called to the tournament (ll. 41ff.) and are shown arming themselves and preparing to ride (ll. 49-50); and that the king himself mounts and leaves (ll. 57-58).

But to underscore the fact that the scene of the king and queen together is a figure of the moral condition seen in the soul-body model, the poet provides another way of looking at the same spirit-flesh question. When the king leaves, Launcelot goes to the queen's chamber, kneels before the queen, and greets her:

> Launcelot forth wendes he
> Unto the chamber to the queen,
> And set him down upon his knee
> And salues there that lady sheen.
> "Launcelot, what dostou here with me?
> The king is went and the court bydene;
> I drede we shall discovered be
> Of the love is us between." (ll. 65-72)

She tells Launcelot that Agravain is trying to catch them and that he should arm himself quickly and leave (ll. 73-80). Launcelot then goes to his chamber, puts on "rich attire," mounts, and rides away.

There are structural connections in plenty to ally the two parts of the first scene. In the first the king lies by the queen, and in the second we hear that people in many countries knew that "Launcelot by by the queen lay" (ll. 61-62). In the first, the queen tells the king that he should call a tournament; in the second, she hastens Launcelot on his way to it. Knights in the first part, Launcelot in the second, arm themselves. In the first the king mounts and leaves, and in the second Launcelot mounts and leaves. The structural similarities point to a thematic unity in the scene. In the body-soul images we can see that the poet is indeed considering the matter of moral choice and that the Gaynor-Launcelot episode is parallel to and a commentary on the Arthur-Gaynor segment.

What is introduced in the Gaynor-Launcelot conversation is the adulterous relationship, which can be read figuratively. Just as Arthur turning to his wife for counsel is a figure of the soul turning to its sensual nature, here Gaynor is the soul, the "lady sheen," the mistress before her servant and the soul before her earthly lover. The Arthur-Gaynor conversation as a figure of moral choice is strengthened as the soul is now shown committing spiritual lechery. And as if to make the moral condition even more emphatically a central issue of the first scene, the poet has included, in addition to the husband-wife-lover imagery, the images of king, country, horse and rider, clothing, and light and dark (we are told twice that Agravain waits for Launcelot and Gaynor "night and day". ll. 64, 74).

In the first chapter we saw that contextual probability is as necessary as tradition when one wishes to defend the presence of levels of meaning which extend beyond the narrative level. In the Morte Arthur there are three kinds of contexts in which the body-soul images are found. We have seen that the author of this poem regards the soul-body conflict as significant: it is figured forth in the first scene of the poem, first in the conversation between Arthur and Gaynor and then in the meeting of Gaynor and Launcelot. Accordingly we should expect him to include in his poem other body-soul images. The first kind of context then, established by the first scene and developed throughout the poem, is the general intention of the author to investigate the moral struggle by way of the body-soul struggle. Many images which appear in the poem thus function as the images in the Debate Between the Body and the Soul functioned--they add resonance to the central conflict without comment from the author. An image of this kind is when Launcelot and then Gaynor are placed "in prison" by the poet. The poet does not need to underscore the moral significance of the action any more than the author of the Debate needed to draw out the significance when the soul was slung into hell, and "anon þe donge it was fordit." In fact, if the author did stress each of the many images of the body-soul struggle, the poem would suffer from a wooden allegorization; and it would lose the peculiar flavor it has by virtue of the poet's ability to point out the attractiveness of the chivalric world at the same time that he looks to more important matters.

We should not overlook the very large extent to which the action is paralleled by the soul-body images. The story is about a king and a rebellious subject. It is also about a husband and wife and her lover.

The poem is also about a kingdom. In fact, rival kingdoms, and about civil war. If the basic events of the story therefore reflect the moral struggle, and if we see many other images also used in the body-soul discussions, such as horse and rider, sailor and ship, and light and dark, appearing in the poem, would it not, as Kaske suggested, "outrage probability" to say that all these images were unrelated and unrelated to the flesh-spirit conception of man's moral condition? My purpose is to point out the very many occurrences of body-soul images in this poem. We will see that the Morte Arthur, while not an allegory, is a resonant examination of the moral life seen in the images of the relationship between the body and the soul.[28]

The second kind of contextual probability urging us to see larger meanings is when the author apparently does not want us to miss the moral drama at work and provides us with a concentration of images of the body and soul. When the penitent Gaynor tells Launcelot that she is now concerned with her "soule hele" (l. 3655) and that he should go to his own kingdom, keep it from war and wrack, and take a wife "with her to play" (ll. 3662ff.), the three images of the body-soul relationship, kingdom, war, and husband-wife, are difficult to miss. The difference between the first and second types of contexts is a matter of emphasis, with the poet bringing forth the clusters with more conscious effort.

The third kind of context, which is the most ingenious and the most pleasurable to discover, is when the initial scene which we have examined is recalled in a later scene. There are several of these, the finest of which is Arthur's renunciation scene (ll. 3438ff.). The king is no longer lying, but standing; he is no longer in bed, but beside an altar; and he

is no longer planning a tournament, but giving commands to have his sword thrown into the sea. In these scenes there is the most careful attempt on the part of the poet to remind the reader of the first scene and of the moral issues of the poem. These scenes usually involve a bed, a frequently recurring image in the poem; and, appearing throughout the poem, they keep the moral drama before us.

With these three types of contexts in mind: the context established by the first scene which lays the foundation for the flesh-spirit struggle as an important concern of the poem as a whole, the context of concentrated clusters of images, and reminiscences of the first scene, we can see that the poet is attempting to bring the moral issues of the tale to the attention of his audience systematically and with subtlety.

After the prologue and introductory scene of the poem, Launcelot rides to Winchester, "that riche citee," to the tournament, and as he arrives the moral overtones appear in images of king, castle, and horse-rider. Launcelot is in disguise, pretending to be an old man; and Arthur "in a castle" (l. 95) watches "on a towr" (l. 105) with Ewain. They see an old man who seems hardly able to wield his limbs (l. 101). They are rather more interested in the horse than in the unknown man; but when the horse stumbles, the quick reflex of the rider reveals that he is Launcelot:

> They beheld him both anon
> A stounde for the steedes sake;
> His horse stomeled at a stone
> That all his body there-with gan shake;
> The knight then braundished ich a bone,
> As he the bridle up gan take;
> There-by wiste they both anon
> That it was Launcelot du Lake. (ll. 113-20)

When Launcelot's horse stumbles, we are not sure whose body, the horse's or Launcelot's, is shaken; and the ambiguity is important. Launcelot takes control quickly, grips the bridle, and is once again in control of his horse. But there seems to be a deliberate similarity between the horse and Launcelot's body. This similarity continues as Arthur and Ewain agree not to acknowledge Launcelot openly because they will always be able to recognize him "by his deed/ And by the horse that he hath brought" (ll. 135-36).

The scene relates several truths through the imagery. Arthur, as a king in a castle, is a figure of a soul in a body, and he continues to appear unwise. He believes Launcelot is "Of all the world the best knight/ Of beautee and of bountee" (ll. 123-25), and his shallow values correspond to his ignorance of Launcelot's affair with Gaynor. Launcelot is disguised as an old man and is a figure of the vetus homo, the old, carnal man. While he does control the horse he is riding, he is not in control of his body as he engages in an affair with Gaynor. He is too weak morally to wield the reins of his physical appetite.

Between the time that Launcelot is seen by Arthur and Ewain and the time that the tournament is held, Launcelot stays with the Lord of Ascolot and with the aunt of another knight. In this scene (ll. 137-256) Launcelot is given the armor of a sick son unable to attend the tournament, the Maid of Ascolot asks for Launcelot's love, and Launcelot and another son of Ascolot decide to fight on the side of Galahod, whose forces are weaker, because any deed done for him "wolde us turn to more honour" (l. 240).

The centerpiece of the scene is the moment in the Maid's chamber when she professes her love and Launcelot courteously declines. The Maid

has sat by Launcelot at supper, weeping for joy at being beside him, and after supper she goes to her chamber:

> Up then rose that maiden still,
> And to her chamber went she tho;
> Down upon her bed she fell,
> That nigh her herte brast in two.
> Launcelot wiste what was her will,
> Well he knew by other mo;
> Her brother cleped he him til,
> And to her chamber gonne they go.
>
> He sat him down for the maidens sake,
> Upon her bedde there she lay;
> Courtaisly to her he spake,
> For to comfort that faire may.
> In her armes she gan him take,
> And these wordes gan she say:
> "Sir, but yif that ye it make,
> Save my life no leche may."
>
> "Lady," he said, "thou most let;
> For me ne gif thee nothing ill;
> In another stede mine herte is set;
> It is not at mine owne will;
> In erthe is nothing that shall me let
> To be thy knight loud and still;
> Another time we may be met
> When thou may better speke thy fill."
>
> "Sithe I of thee ne may have more,
> As thou art hardy knight and free,
> In the tournament that thou wolde bere
> Some sign of mine that men might see."
> "Lady, thy sleeve thou shalt of-shere;
> I will it take for the love of thee;
> So did I never no ladies ere,
> But one that most hath loved me." (ll. 185-216)

This scene is a reminiscence of the initial scene with Arthur and Gaynor in bed. Like the segment with Arthur and Gaynor, Launcelot, although he is not lying, is sitting "Upon her bedde there she lay." And like the introductory scene, we find here a test of wills--Launcelot here "wiste what was her will" and says that his heart "is not at mine owne will." The Maid wants Launcelot's love, and there is even a memory

of Gaynor with Launcelot as Launcelot declines the Maid's love because of his love for the queen. Launcelot agrees to carry the sleeve of the Maid, which he has done for no one but Gaynor.

The recollection of the first scene in the episode with the Maid of Ascolot is a reminder of the flesh-spirit struggle which the poet is charting in the poem. And there are in this section, as well, several images of the body-soul relationship, one of which is developed at length. The image of the castle is clear, as Launcelot stays first with the Earl of Ascolot and then at the castle of the aunt (l. 249). There are scattered images of thorn (the Maid's "rode was red as blossom on brere," (l. 179), swine (Arthur's knights are "bold and breme as bore," l. 229), and battle, in the discussion of the tournament and coming "stour" (l. 236). There is also some clothing imagery in the curious exchange of apparel when Launcelot takes the armor of the sick son for his own "weed" (l. 176). Launcelot also tells the Maid to cut off her sleeve--"Lady, thy sleeve thou shalt of-shere" (l. 213)--and promises to bear it in the tournament.

The most extensively developed image, however, is of light and dark. Launcelot arrives at the Earl's castle intending to "dwell all night" (l. 140). The Earl agrees that Launcelot and his well son will ride "at morrow" (l. 167) to the tournament together; and indeed,

> On the morrow when it was day,
> They dined and made them yare. (ll. 217-18)

Launcelot suggests that he and his companion stay "Tonight" outside Winchester (l. 243). They arrive at the castle of a "lady fair and bright" (l. 250), who is glad "That they wolde dwell with her that night" (l. 252). They leave "on the morrow" (l. 255).

The events leading up to the tournament and centering around the

stay at Ascolot's castle are thus infused with imagery of the body-soul conflict. The first scene is remembered when Launcelot and the Maid of Ascolot talk, and the other images of the scene keep before us the importance of the flesh-spirit struggle in the narrative. At the tournament (ll. 257-320), a rough and tumble affair, the moral implications are as vivid as the action. Swine images appear--Arthur's men are "bold and breme as bore" (l. 229), and one of them, Ewain, is "Breme as any wilde bore" (l. 266). However, the most important image is the rider and the horse, the horses and riders functions not only of the tournament but of the poet's moral consciousness as well.

Throughout the scene, the knights are in various stages of being horsed or not. "Arthurs knightes rode," and Galahod's party is being led away "on foot" (ll. 260-62) as Launcelot arrives. Launcelot springs at Ewain and unhorses him (l. 270). After Ewain is "unhorsed" (l. 275), Bors springs to battle to be similarly knocked off his horse: "The nexte way to ground he chese" (l. 278). When Lionel comes forth, Launcelot strikes him with a sword and he <u>and</u> his horse go down: "Both horse and man there yede adown" (l. 288). Ector then prepares to test the strange knight and "A noble steed Ector him chese" (l. 301). When he meets Launcelot, he is wounded, the strike so powerful that he and his horse also fall: "Launcelot hit him on the hood,/ That his horse fell and he beside" (ll. 309-310). Launcelot rides out of the field, blinding in his own blood (ll. 311-12); and the others ride out as well (l. 313).

The scene, while it is bold and heroic, is also a specific commentary on the moral condition of the kingdom. Launcelot's desire for

"more honour" and his decision to fight on the weaker side against Arthur's forces is parallel to Arthur's attempt to achieve more honor for his court by calling the tournament in the first place. Moreover, Launcelot's feat, the unhorsing of Arthur's knights in mock battle, forecasts Launcelot's disruptive effect on the kingdom at the same time that it is a fruition of the disorder set in motion by Arthur's carnal desire for honor.

In the period of Launcelot's convalescence at the aunt's castle (ll. 321-569), Launcelot is treated by a physician, or leche, but he wants to participate in a second tourney which Arthur calls. When Arthur hears that the knight who had been so valiant at the first tournament is wounded, he decides not to hold another tournament. Bors and Lionel in this segment search for Launcelot and find him at the Earl's castle and take back the good news to court that Launcelot has been found and is alive. Eventually Launcelot recovers from his wounds and leaves Ascolot.

In this part of the poem, the poet writes much in the traditional chivalric spirit. Launcelot is so impatient to go to the tournament that he tries to rise, breaks open his wounds, and the doctor, ready to leave in disgust, has to be persuaded to stay. Ewain reports to the king, "Certes, no coward knight is he" (l. 410). There is also the friendly badinage when Ector realizes that it is Launcelot whom he has wounded. Moreover, when Gaynor hears that Launcelot is well, she is joyful and immediately wants to share the good news with the king:

> The queen lough with herte free,
> When she wiste he was on life:
> "O, worthy God, what wele is me!
> Why ne wiste my lord it also swithe!"
> To the forest rode these knightes three,
> To the king it to kithe;

Jesu Crist then thankes he,
For was he never of word so blithe. (ll. 528-35)

Much of the tone of the scene results from the simple pleasure in recounting the bravery and impetuosity of Launcelot and the love that his king and queen had for him.

But there are features of the scene which will not fit docilely into this spirit celebrative of Launcelot and the Round Table. There are first of all the images of the body-soul struggle which appear in this section. Images of light-dark, castle, lord-servant, horse and rider, and country appear. Images of light and darkness appear in the frequent references to day and night. The companion tells Launcelot that they may stay at the aunt's castle "all night" (l. 322). When Launcelot sleeps there he is unable to turn "by the morrow that it was day" (l. 333). The herald arrives at night (l. 355) to tell of a tournament on Sunday, which Launcelot wishes to fight in, "Though I sholde die this ilke day" (l. 368). When the herald leaves Launcelot he travels from morning to night to reach Winchester:

The heraud then went on his way
At morrow when the day was light,
Also swithe as ever he may,
To Winchester that ilke night. . . . (ll. 329-95)

The earl's son stays with Launcelot "night and day" (l. 426), and when Gawain hears that Launcelot is well he does not rest "night ne day" (l. 551) until he finds him. There are also independent references to day (ll. 447, 504, 523) and one to a fortnight in which the etymological basis is not lost: "Away he [i.e., Gawain] was for fourtenight" (l. 575).

A castle is mentioned four times (ll. 249, 330, 355, and 442), the last time with Launcelot walking on the walls. The lord-subject or

servant image appears in the relationship between the king and queen and their subjects. For example, the knights kneel before the queen at line 520, and the king opens the scene with knights around him as he sends heralds out to announce a new tournament. Launcelot's companion volunteers to serve Launcelot: "And I myself will with you abide,/ And be your servaunt and your knight" (ll. 327-28). The earl's sons also serve Launcelot and the Maid of Ascolot at table: "To serve them [they] were never sad" (l. 461). As usual the image of knights riding is common (ll. 341, 350, 367, 375, 406, 413, 430, 549, and 568), and there are two references to a land, or country. Arthur sends heralds "Through Yngland" (l. 347), and Bors and Lionel seek Launcelot through "Many a land" (l. 438). With references to the king, there are in 255 lines of poetry at least thirty-nine occurrences of images which also appear in discussions about the relationship between the body and the soul, not counting the love of the Maid of Ascolot for Launcelot or Launcelot's adultery with Gaynor. One becomes uneasy about accepting the chivalric material superficially and wants to review the scene more carefully.

When we examine the scene we see a curious comparison between Launcelot and Arthur. Launcelot is lying in bed, unable to turn (l. 334), yet anxious to go to the tournament. He is eager of honor, and when he learns that Arthur has called another tournament, he desperately wants to go:

> When knights win worship and pride,
> Some aunter shall hold me away. . . . (ll. 361-62)

While Launcelot is lying in bed, or rather refusing to lie, Arthur lies at Winchester (l. 340), where he calls the second tournament, and Gaynor is lying at the court (l. 515). With these homonyms and with the

comparison between Launcelot's desire for honor and Arthur's call for another tournament, together with the frequent body-soul images which we have discovered in this scene, we are again reminded of the initial scene, where Arthur and Gaynor, lying in bed planning a tournament to regain honor, were figures of the spirit-flesh struggle.

The comparison, in spite of the laudatory comments about Launcelot, is ultimately not favorable to Launcelot or to Arthur. The doctor, refusing to tend a patient who will not submit to his direction, is not simply a foil to illustrate Launcelot's courage, but a voice of reason. Moreover, the herald, reporting that Launcelot refused to lie quietly, says that he has seen a "fooled knight" (l. 402). While the evaluation might be regarded as a compliment by a spirited knight, applied to Launcelot in his quest for honor and by analogy to Arthur in _his_ quest for honor, it is accurately condemnatory, as the later sections of the story make clear. The episode of convalescence then is used by the poet on the one hand to admire the chivalric courage and impetuosity of Launcelot, and on the other to view the happenings in a graver light. Accordingly, he has given us the body-soul images and the juxtaposition of Launcelot and Arthur to show us the larger moral implications of Arthur's quest for honor for his kingdom and Launcelot's quest after honor for himself.

Shortly after Launcelot leaves, Gawain arrives; and a section of the poem consists of Gawain and the Maid of Ascolot talking, of Gawain back at Arthur's castle reporting that the Maid is Launcelot's _leman_, and of Lionel's and Ector's meeting with Launcelot in the forest. There is some lively dialogue and action, but the moral judgment of the poet is

suggested in the images of adultery, country, horse and rider, battle, lord and servant, and light and dark. The Maid lies that Launcelot "For his leman he hath me take" (l. 582). Gawain replies that he can certainly believe that the Maid has begun to love Launcelot, because "There is no lady of flesh ne bone. . ./ That might her love holde him fro" (ll. 588-91). Gawain is shown Launcelot's shield as proof, is pleased that Launcelot has taken the Maid as leman, and pledges to be her knight for Launcelot's sake (ll. 606-07).

Gawain looks for Launcelot--there is an interesting double meaning when he says that Launcelot "was full ivel for to find" (l. 619)--and eventually arrives at court. There he tells the king and queen that Launcelot has chosen a leman, which the king is delighted to hear (ll. 640-41) and which Gaynor is prostrated by:

> The queen then said no mo,
> But to her chamber soon she yede,
> And down upon her bed fell so
> That nigh of wit she wolde wede.
> "Alas," she said, "and wele-a-wo,
> That ever I ought life in lede!
> The beste body is lost me fro
> That ever in stour bestrode steed." (ll. 648-55)

The dramatic grief of the queen could, I suppose, be taken simply as testimony of her great love for Launcelot, but the moral overtones can hardly be missed. There is of course the image of adultery which underlies the scene and which is strengthened by Gaynor being shown in bed. But the lede, the nation or country, also points to the body as country; the horse-rider image appears in the last two lines; and the image of battle appears in the last line.[29] The moral conflict between the body and the soul is also at hand when Gaynor refers to Launcelot as "the beste body."

The knights Lionel and Ector meet Launcelot in the forest and, delighted to see "their master," fall on their knees for joy (ll. 673-74). They tell him of the queen's being seke (ll. 664, 681), how the king and court miss Launcelot, and together the three knights do not stop "night ne day" (l. 701) until they come to court.

When Launcelot arrives at court he is received by the king and the other knights, and he remains with them for three days before he sees the queen. The scene of his arrival is of joy and reunion, of warmth and love; but the poet gives clear markers for a moral interpretation:

> The king stood in a towr on high,
> Besides him stands Sir Gawain;
> Launcelot when that they sigh
> Were never men on molde so fain.
> They ran as swithe as ever they might
> Out at the gates him again;
> Was never tidandes to them so light;
> The king him kissed and knight and swain.
>
> To a chamber the king him led;
> Fair in armes they gonne him fold,
> And set him on a riche bed,
> That spredde was with a cloth of gold;
> To serve him there was no man sad,
> Ne dight him as himselfe wolde
> To make him both blithe and glad,
> And sithe aunters he them told. (ll. 704-19)

I said earlier in the chapter that this scene could be read as a celebration of the genuineness of the brotherhood of knights, but I would now like to qualify that assertion by pointing out the images of moral conflict which the poet has included.

A king watches from a tower of a castle the approach of someone, and then he and his knights and men rush "Out at the gates" to meet him. The symbol is of the soul rushing out of the castle of the body by way of the openings of the senses. In addition, the king and everyone else kiss Launcelot, bring him to a chamber, embrace him again, and set

him on a bed. While the poet is pointing to the love of the knights for each other, he is also reminding us of another love, between the king and Gaynor, which Launcelot is disrupting. The exuberance of the knights' love draws attention to the husband-wife-lover problem which will destroy the kingdom. Everyone is glad to serve Launcelot, and he tells them of adventures (while we remember that Gaynor looked forward to aunters resulting from the tournament, l. 33) which he has experienced. The scene recalls the first scene of the poem, with the king and queen in bed, with its larger significance of a conflict between fleshly and spiritual desires.

Launcelot has not been able to see the queen, and we learn that "The lady, bright as blossom on brere" (l. 724) longs to see him. The image of brightness appears--earlier Launcelot had asked about "my lady bright" (l. 679), and shortly he will kiss "that lady sheen" (l. 736)--as well as the image of the thorn, the "blossom on brere" which will be used again at line 835. Launcelot lies "long in bedde" waiting to see the queen and finally goes to her chamber to see her, only to be chastised for infidelity:

> First he kissed the lady sheen,
> And salues her with herte free,
> And sithe the ladies all bydene;
> For joy the teres ran on their blee.
> "Wele-away," then said the queen,
> "Launcelot, that I ever thee see!
> The love that hath us be between,
> That it shall thus departed be!
>
> "Alas, Launcelot du Lake
> Sithe thou hast all my herte in wold,
> Th' erles doughter that thou wolde take
> Of Ascolot, as men me told!
> Now thou levest for her sake
> All thy deed of armes bold;
> I may wofully weep and wake
> In clay til I be clongen cold!

"But Launcelot, I beseech thee here,
Sith it needelinges shall be so,
That thou never more diskere
The love that hath been betwix us two,
Ne that she never be with thee so dere,
Deed of armes that thou be fro,
That I may of thy body here,
Sithe I shall thus beleve in wo." (ll. 736-59)

The queen's misunderstanding of Launcelot's relationship creates a fiery and ironic scene. The woman in an adulterous relationship accuses her lover of infidelity and laments the passing of their love.

At the same time, the lady and knight are related much as a soul and a body are. The lady is "sheen"; and the references to "The love that hath us be between" and "The love that hath been betwix us two" keep in the foreground the love relationship between a soul and a body, much as we saw in the Debate, where the soul lamented the love which it had lavished on the body. The charges of adultery suggest the unfaithfulness of a body to a soul; and Gaynor, as she did before, reduces Launcelot to a body when she says she wants to hear of "thy body." Gaynor also sees her life as consisting of lamentation in her clay body until death: "I may wofully weep and wake/ In clay til I be clongen cold." When Launcelot hears the recriminations, "His herte was hevy as any stone" (l. 761), and the image of the body as burden further underscores the soul-body echoes of the scene.

The aftermath of the scene is that Launcelot, surprised but defiant, leaves the room, goes to his chamber, dresses to leave, and rides away from court, leaving the queen and court downcast at his departure. In this section the moral drama continues through the use of images of clothing, horse-rider, king, castle, and land. Launcelot goes to his

chamber "There his own attire in lay,/ [And] armed him in noble weed" (ll. 776-77). On the other hand, "The queen was in her bed all naked" (l. 812). Launcelot mounts his steed (l. 782) and rides into the forest. Word reaches court that Launcelot is "upon his steed" (l. 785); and Bors, Lionel, and Ector "Followen him on horses snell" (l. 790), although they cannot overtake him after he has ridden into a forest (l. 793). Gawain counsels the king to wait in the castle (l. 826), that he and the knights will ride (l. 828) into "alle landes fer and ner" (l. 829) to find Launcelot. We know that the search will be difficult because Bors and the other knights "ne wiste never where to fare,/ Ne to what land that he wolde" (ll. 800-01). The poet is not seeking to develop a rigid allegorical statement. What we find in the body-soul images are simply echoes of the central moral conflict which the poet established in the first scene and which he has reminded us of in segments which have recalled that first scene.

In the episode following, in which a Scottish knight is poisoned and his brother, Sir Mador, arrives to demand justice (ll. 834ff.), two new images of the body-soul relationship are introduced. While we have seen battle suggested before, now rebellion is introduced for the first time, by way of the treason which everyone thinks Gaynor has committed by poisoning the knight; and the image of the tomb is prominent.

Sometime after Launcelot has left court, Gaynor, "bright as blossom on brere," is eating, sitting between Gawain and a Scottish knight. A squire has poisoned an apple, thinking Gaynor will offer it to Gawain. Instead Gaynor gives the apple to the Scottish knight, who dies and is buried in a tomb with his fate inscribed by a clerk.

Sir Mador happens to ride by the tomb, reads the letters, and goes to Arthur for justice. Arthur announces a trial by combat. In the scene are images of thorn, horse-rider, and king. Images of the country appear as well: the Scottish knight "was of an uncouthe stede" (l. 851); Arthur is king of the land (l. 920), but he must enforce justice; and news of the proceedings "sprang soon through ech countree" (l. 930). Other previously introduced images are light (ll. 874, 936), battle (l. 885), and burden (l. 905). And there is a remarkable use of marriage imagery as Arthur formalizes the agreement between Gaynor and Mador for trial by combat:

> There-to both their handes upheld
> And trewly their trouthes plight. (ll. 927-28)

The irony is that Gaynor has already pledged her troth in a different way to Arthur, and she has broken that vow.

But in addition to the images which have illustrated the flesh-spirit conflict in the poem before, in this scene treason, which will assume a larger significance later, appears for the first time. When Gaynor innocently gives the knight the apple, the narrator says, "Of treasoun took there no man heed" (l. 853). When Launcelot hears of the matter, he understands that Gaynor has "slain with grete tresoun" (l. 937) the Scottish knight. The tomb image is found when the knight is buried in "A riche tomb" (l. 876), the same "riche tomb" (l. 996) which Mador finds, reads the inscription of, and falls over in grief:

> There he lost both main and might,
> And over the tomb he fell in swough. (ll. 902-03)

Both of these images will be used frequently throughout the rest of the poem as powerful images of the body-soul conflict which the poet is examining.

As Gawain and Arthur are standing on a tower of the castle, another episode begins when a "little bote" drifts down a stream beneath the tower bearing the body of the Maid of Ascolot and a note which she has written (ll. 960ff.). In the letter the Maid explains that she had not been Launcelot's leman, but on the contrary that she had died of sorrow because of Launcelot's rejection of her. The queen soon receives the news and realizes that she has made a mistake in being so harsh with Launcelot. The scene from one point of view reveals the complexities of the chivalric code, particularly about the demands of love. In her note the Maid charges Launcelot with churlishness for refusing her (ll. 1082ff.), and the king says that Launcelot is at fault:

> That Launcelot was gretly to blame,
> And had him won a reproving,
> For ever, and a wicked fame;
> Sithe she died for grete loving,
> That he her refused it may him shame. (ll. 1099-1103)

Gawain, who had seen the armor and reported what the Maid had told him, now feels he has gabbed, or lied (l. 1005). The queen is angry with Gawain, saying that he has not been courteous:

> I wend thou haddest be stable and trew
> And full of all courtaisy,
> But now me think thy manners new;
> They ben all turned to vilainy,
> Now thou on knightes makest thy glewe
> To lie upon them for envy;
> Who that thee worshippeth, it may them rew;
> Therefore, devoied my company! (ll. 1160-67)

The queen is of course upset about her own mistake, and she is too critical of Gawain. There is no evidence that he acted from envy, but from a real conviction that the Maid had been Launcelot's leman. The scene raises the question, Is a knight bound by chivalry to become the lover of a woman when she requests it? Or, Should one not report the

truth as he believes it? The latter question will be raised again in connection with the knights' knowledge of the affair between Launcelot and Gaynor.

But the questions raised by the chivalric code, however intriguing, must yield to an even more basic consideration raised by the religious implications seen in the body-soul images. Once again the images of king and castle are prominent, opening the scene (ll. 955, 958, 962). Images of stream and boat are also clear. The "bote" is mentioned five times, and though it is a small boat, it is comparable to the best ships: "There might none fairer sail on flood/ Ne better forged as of tree" (ll. 966-67). Within the boat is a "fair bed" (l. 994), and there is the discussion of Launcelot's refusal to be the Maid's lover (l. 1021). The note calls to mind the scene of Launcelot and the Maid, which itself was patterned after the first scene of the poem. It is significant, I think, that the dead body bears a compliment of the sort Arthur was seeking in calling the first tournament. He wanted the renown of the Round Table to be spread through the world (cf. l. 126), and the Maid's note says that though one searched through the world,

> Men sholde nowhere find your make,
> All noblesse to find that might be sought. (ll. 1062-63)

Larger moral issues are thus suggested, and the feeling we get hearing about the complexities of chivalry is that the court is missing more crucial matters. When the queen chastises herself for suspecting Launcelot's loyalty to her, we should see her shallowness:

> Herte, alas! Why are thou wode
> To trowe that Launcelot du Lake
> Were so false and fikel of mood
> Another leman than thee to take? (ll. 1176-79)

The queen is impressed by Launcelot's fidelity; we are puzzled by a moral code which allows adultery in any case. And our puzzlement is caused by the poet's inclusion of body-soul images which establish the poem's moral foundation.

After line 1181 the manuscript of Le Morte Arthur is lacking a leaf,[30] and as the action resumes there is a unit consisting of some 450 lines (ll. 1318-1671) in which the queen searches for a champion to defend her. She is rebuffed by the knights because she has caused Launcelot to leave the court, Bors eventually agrees to defend her, and Launcelot at the last moment arrives to carry out a victorious battle against Sir Mador. The scene is suspenseful, as Gaynor falls on her knees before the different knights asking for a champion; and it is stirring when Launcelot is found:

> As they came by the forest side,
> Their orisons for to make,
> The noblest knight then saw they ride
> That ever was in erthe shape;
> His loreme lemed all with pride;
> Steed and armour all was blake;
> His name is nought to hele and hide:
> He hight Sir Launcelot du Lake! (ll. 1467-74)

There are also references to tresoun (ll. 1553, 1572), and we are aware of Gaynor's innocence of the charge of killing the Scottish knight while we know that she is guilty of another charge of treason. The scene is one of the tensest and most enjoyable for narrative drama of the whole poem.

In the scene, however, are also images of the relationship between the body and the soul. The most prominent are king, husband-wife-lover, and battle. But others appear as well. The action is framed by fire

images, and fire is important within the scene. We learn that the queen must find a knight to fight for her, "Or elles yeld her to be brent" (l. 1319). Bors' first response to the Queen is that she is "well worthy to be brent" (l. 1351). When the queen sees that the fire is ready (l. 1420), she again appeals to Bors. And at the close of the episode, when a squire confesses under torture that he has poisoned the apple which killed the knight, he receives the fires which might have consumed the queen:

> The squier then was done to shende,
> As it was bothe law and right,
> Drawen and honged and for-brende. . . . (ll. 1664-66)[31]

An image of the thorn appears when Ector swears by Christ who "for us bore the crown of thorn" (l. 1393). Earth appears when the poet describes Launcelot as "The noblest knight. . ./ That ever was in erthe shape" (ll. 1469-70). Images of country (l. 1605) and castle (ll. 1605, 1641) also occur.

The most conspicuously developed images are of the horse and rider and of light and dark. A swine image appears at line 1600, with Launcelot as "breme as bore," but the image of horsemanship is more noticeable. The knights refuse to defend the queen because "Again the right we will not ride" (l. 1338). There is the meeting with Launcelot, riding on a black horse, to which I will return, and Launcelot's arrival at court:

> Then as Sir Mador loudest spake
> The queen of tresoun to becall,
> Comes Sir Launcelot du Lake,
> Ridand right into the hall. (ll. 1552-55)

Mador goes to his horse in response (l. 1578), and the battle begins. Both knights are "unhorsed" (l. 1584), and they finish the battle on foot. When Launcelot wins and takes off his visor to be recognized,

the knights ride and run to meet him (l. 1328).

In the light-dark imagery the poet most directly comments on the moral struggle, especially as the images are applied to Launcelot and Gaynor. The queen is "bright" (l. 1427) and her attendant ladies and maidens are also"bright" (l. 1440). Launcelot asks, much as he did before (l. 679), "How now fares my lady bright?" (l. 1482). We know that Gaynor's brightness is a false brightness; and toward the end of the scene, when Mador forgives the queen believing "That no guilt had the lady sheen" (l. 1557), we know that she does have a grave guilt, a treason of another sort.

The light-dark imagery also is applied to Launcelot; and he is presented as dark, though with an attractiveness. When he meets the knights in the forest, as we saw earlier, "His loreme [reins] lemed all with pride;/ Steed and armour all was blake" (ll. 1471-72). When he rides into the hall to defend the queen, "His steed and armour all was blake" (l. 1556). He makes his announcement that he has come to fight in behalf of a lady; and Sir Mador is as glad to see the champion arrive as a bird is glad for the arrival of morning:

> Then was Sir Mador also blithe
> As fowl of day after the night. (ll. 1576-77)

The light-dark images thus suggest initially that the queen is bright and Launcelot is dark. As such they generally figure forth the light of the soul and the darkness of the body. But the queen's brightness is suspect because she is not <u>sheen</u> morally. And Launcelot's genuine moral darkness eclipses his superficially bright and shining appearance. Sir Mador leaves Launcelot as if he were leaving the night. The effect of the episode, with all its narrative drama, is to urge us

to keep in mind another lively drama stated through the body-soul images.

Treason, which has been mentioned earlier, is now used as a central theme of the scene in which the affair between Launcelot and the queen is brought to the attention of the king (ll. 1672-1903). Agravain and three other knights stand talking about Launcelot's affair; and Agravain compares his own falseness with Launcelot's treason, which they are all hiding:

> How false men shall we us make?
> And how long shall we hele and laine
> The tresoun of Launcelot du Lake? (ll. 1677-79)

Agravain further states that Launcelot "lies by the queen" and "Again the king traitour is he" (ll. 1682-83). Gawain gives three reasons for not telling the king: war would be inevitable, Launcelot would bring many lands to his aid, and telling the king would be a betrayal of Launcelot:

> Launcelot shall I never betrayn,
> Behind his back to be his fo. (ll. 1702-03)

The king happens upon the conversation and demands to know what is being discussed. Agravain tells the king that Launcelot has lain by the queen for years, everyone at court knows about it, and the knights "have false and traitors been" for not telling the king (l. 1735). The king is saddened that Launcelot, a man of such nobility, should be false, that "In him sholde any tresoun be!" (l. 1743).

Agravain suggests that the king go hunting overnight to give the knights a chance to trap Launcelot, Launcelot is delighted at a chance to see the queen, and Bors warns him of treachery:

> Sir, tonight I rede ye dwell;
> I drede there be some treason dight
> With Agravain. . . . (ll. 1776-78)

But Launcelot is heedless of the advice: "I will wend my lady til." (l. 1786). He goes to Gaynor without armor, merely in "a robe all single wrought," and with only a sword: "Of tresoun dredde he him right nought" (l. 1797). Launcelot and Gaynor do not fear any treason (l. 1803); and just after he gets into bed with the queen, Agravain and the other knights surprise him:

> Launcelot of tresoun they begredde,
> Calld him false and kinges traitour. . . . (ll. 1812-13)

They call him a "recreant false knight" (l. 1833) and tell him to fight, which he does, killing one of Agravain's men. Launcelot goes to his own knights, Bors and others, who have been unable to sleep because of dreams and fears of treason (ll. 1876-79), and they all ride away.

The charges of treason against Launcelot are true, and Bors and the other knights with Launcelot are not justified in using the term. Nevertheless the several references to treason keep constantly before us the concept of treachery, of betrayal; and the false servant and subject is a common image of body-soul discussions. But the image of the traitor is not the only image which leads to larger meanings. There is the image of the king, here faced with the false Launcelot and with the false knights who have not told him of the affair. There is the husband-wife-lover imagery, and there are images of war and fighting, horse and rider, and of country.

Two final images in the episode are of clothing and of prison. Launcelot comes to Gaynor's chamber clad only in a robe, which he presumably removes. He puts the robe back on when the knights call him to fight (l. 1836), and after he kills the knight he locks the door and arms himself in the dead knight's armor. As he dresses in the armor

he is aware of the parallel between his being behind the door he has barred and being in prison:

> The knight that Launcelot has slain,
> His armour fand he fair and bright;
> Hastely he hath them off-drayn
> And there-in himselfe dight.
> "Now know thou well, Sir Agravain,
> Thou prisouns me no more tonight!" (ll. 1848-53)

Launcelot's nakedness, his robe and armor, his feeling of being imprisoned, together with the other soul and body images, give the scene of discovery a tone, not of rigorous allegory, but certainly of the poet's moral consciousness. When Launcelot kisses and embraces Gaynor and goes to bed with her, we have again a scene comparable to that of Arthur and Gaynor in bed together; and the other images of the scene add support to this central body-soul figure.

The section of the poem from line 1904 to line 2109 is concerned with the actions resulting from the disclosure of the affair until Launcelot gathers his forces and is besieged in Joyous Gard. The body-soul images of traitor (l. 1908), king (ll. 1966ff.), earth (ll. 1961, 1975), land (ll. 2034, 2090), castle (ll. 2062, 2097), and swine (l. 2101) appear; but the poet more fully develops the images of fire, clothing, and husband-wife-lover.

With the affair now revealed, the queen once again is sentenced to be burned (l. 1925), a fire is prepared (l. 1926), and Gawain refuses to attend the burning: He "wolde never be ner beside/ There any woman sholde be brent" (ll. 1938-39). Launcelot learns that the queen is to be burned (l. 1947), and he and his men mount their horses to save her, do battle with Arthur's men, and save the queen from the fire. As the queen is waiting for her fate, clothing imagery is introduced:

> The queen by the fire stood,
> And in her smok all redy was. (ll. 1950-51)

Gawain goes to a chamber to see the men who have been killed by Launcelot's forces. He is shocked when he lifts the cloths of gold which have been drawn over the bodies, and we are suddenly driven from the chivalric world of gentleness to the real world in which dead bodies testify to the transience of life:

> A cloth he heves then upon height;
> What wonder though his herte were sore,
> So dolefully to see them dight,
> That ere so doughty knightes were! (ll. 1998-2001)

Clothing imagery also appears when Launcelot has a maiden prepared to take a message to Arthur:

> A damesel he did be yare,
> In rich apparail was she dight,
> Hastely in message for to fare
> To the king of mikel might,
> . . .
> The maiden is redy for to ride,
> In a full rich apparailment
> Of samite green, with mikel pride,
> That wrought was in the Orient. (ll. 2048-57)

The contrast between the damsel, luxuriously and proudly dressed, and Gaynor in her simple smock is significant. The damsel comes from Launcelot who is heedless of death, while the queen is "all redy." We see in these two ladies and their clothing two opposing views of life and death.

The support which Arthur and Launcelot muster for the coming battles is shown to come from two different sources, and the husband-wife-lover imagery is central. Arthur sends for help "Throughout England by ich a side,/ To erle, baron, and to knight" (ll. 2090-91), and knights come "Of Yngland and Ireland also,/ Of Wales and Scottes that beste were" (ll. 2098-99). Launcelot on the other hand receives help from the ladies

he has defended in the past:

> Launcelot gan with his folk forth wend,
> With sorry herte and drery mood,
> To queenes and countesses fele he send
> And grete ladies of gentle blood,
> That he had oft their landes defend
> And foughten when them need bestood.
> Ichon her power him lend
> And made his party stiff and good.
>
> Queenes and countesses that riche were
> Send him erles with grete meyne;
> Other ladies that might no more
> Sent him barons or knightes free. (ll. 2030-41)

Launcelot is collecting on old obligations incurred by the ladies he has defended in the past, and the passage is testimony to Launcelot's chivalrous aid to ladies in distress and perhaps to his various past affairs. But the passage suggests not only a reversal of the man-woman relationship, but also an interposition between husband and wife: the kings and earls who are the husbands of these ladies are not mentioned.

After Launcelot has gathered his forces, he goes to Joyous Gard, "that strong citee" (l. 2045), "that riche town" (l. 2109), and is besieged by Arthur's forces. Roger Sherman Loomis has pointed out the popularity of the siege motif in secular literature of the Middle Ages and its use by religious writers to illustrate the moral conflict.[32] There is ample evidence that the poet is considering the moral overtones of the action he is describing. In this initial confrontation between the hosts of Arthur and Launcelot there are images of traitor, musical instrument, clothing, king-subject, horse-rider, earth, and of course civil war and castle.

Launcelot from within the castle calls on Arthur to break the siege and leave (l. 2114), to which the king and Gawain respond by

calling him "false recreant knight" (l. 2119) and "traitor" (l. 2121). The besieging forces make noise with shouting and with "hidous hornes" (l. 2127),[33] as we see the full emergence of discord in the kingdom. Bors advises Launcelot that the forces within should dress "in rich array" and ride out into the field (ll. 2134, 2137). Launcelot is struck by his own consciousness of his betrayal of his lord:

> "Alas," quod Launcelot, "wo is me,
> That ever sholde I see with sight
> Again my lord for to be,
> The noble king that made me knight! (ll. 2142-45)

Eventually the two forces do collide, "With vois and hidous hornes soun" (l. 2155). Gawain rides against Sir Lionel and "Horse and man he bore to ground" (l. 2161). Launcelot engages the king, and though he takes the king's blows, "He so courtais was that tide,/ O dint that he nolde smite again" (ll. 2172-73). Bors, who does not share Launcelot's deference for the king, rides up,

> And on his [i.e., the king's] helm he hit so fast
> That ner he lost all his pride;
> The steede rigge under him brast,
> That he to grounde fell that tide. (ll. 2176-79)

Launcelot is so moved by the sight of his unhorsed king, "The noble king that made me knight!" (l. 2193), that he dismounts and sets the king upon his own horse.

Bors, "breme as any bore" (l. 2214), rides against Gawain, and both are injured: "Either through other body bore" (l. 2220). Both men fall to the ground (l. 2222). The general consequences of the battle are that "knightes under saddles fell" (l. 2232) and steeds waded in the blood (l. 2234-35). Launcelot's forces come out slightly better than Arthur's and retire to the castle (l. 2241).

In addition to the several images of the body-soul relationship, there is also a more direct statement of the poet concerning the moral implications of the action. Launcelot at one point says, "Alas, . . . That ever yet this war began!" (ll. 2204-05); but the poet is more specific when he assigns guilt:

> He that began this wretched play,
> What wonder though he had grete sin?

The question, Who began this fray? has as its answer the joint responsibility of Arthur and Launcelot. The two men have not controlled their fleshly appetites. The former listened to his wife and sensual desire for honor, and the latter has committed adultery with Gaynor.

Rome intervenes and tries to effect a reconcillation between Launcelot and Arthur and a reunion of Arthur and Gaynor. This segment includes the pageant-like procession of Launcelot and Gaynor to Arthur, a moving, beautifully peaceful interlude among the battles which have begun and which will continue. I said earlier that the reunion is complicated by Launcelot's resolute defense of Gaynor's innocence and by a sharp division between the words which are spoken and the truth. We will see now that the episode from the intervention of Rome (l. 2246) to Launcelot's departure for Joyous Gard and then for France (l. 2459) has body-soul images which show the poet's awareness of larger moral issues. Images of land, castle, king, husband-wife-lover, horse-rider, clothing, light-dark, and war stress the spirit-flesh struggle at work.

News of the war has gone "Into all landes north and south" (l. 2246); and it has reached Rome, where the Pope writes a letter to Arthur threatening to place England under interdict: "Enterdite he wolde the

land" (l. 2253). The message is delivered that England should be restored to peace (l. 2261) by Arthur's making peace with Launcelot and receiving again the queen. The king in turn writes Launcelot, tells him of the Pope's threat, and asks that the queen be returned: "Or Yngland enterdite sholde ben" (l. 2284). Launcelot at first thinks that the king has not given him the honor he deserves. Launcelot has fought for the king in many battles and if it had not been for him, "Full cold had been his beste towr" (l. 2290). He is counselled by the Bishop of Rochester that he should think of England before Gaynor ("Women are frele of their entail" l. 2300).

Launcelot is still not convinced--he could be a king, secure in his own kingdom:

> Sir Bishop, castles for to hold,
> Wite you well, I have no need;
> I might be king, yif that I wolde,
> Of al Benwick, that riche thede,
> Ride into my landes bold,
> With my knightes stiff on steed. (ll. 2302-07)

Nevertheless, Launcelot finally consents, and the Bishop gets on his palfrey (l. 2326) and takes Launcelot's reply to the king. An agreement is made; and Launcelot, dressed "in rich array," goes with the queen to meet Arthur.

Launcelot and Gaynor are dressed "in robes of riche weed" and ride on white horses caparisoned in silver and ivory (ll. 2358-60). The trappings for the horses were made "in the hethen thede" (l. 2361). "Launcelot her bridle led," the knights accompanying them are dressed in green, and "All the field about them shone" (l. 2370). When they reach the king, Launcelot takes the queen off her horse (l. 2374).

Launcelot defends Gaynor as one who is "fair and sheen" and pure, and offers to fight to prove her innocence. Arthur tells Launcelot that he and Launcelot had been so dear he is surprised to find that they are now foes:

> Launcelot, I ne wend nevere more
> That thou wolde me have wrought this wo;
> So dere as we samen were,
> There-under that thou was my fo. (ll. 2390-93)

Launcelot protests that he was never far from Arthur and that Arthur has been listening to liars (l. 2462).

Gawain vows eternal enmity to Launcelot, that cordement will never exist until one has slain the other (l. 2426); and when Launcelot sees that peace is impossible he asks permission to ride into his own lands (l. 2430). He expects never to see England again (l. 2435), and Arthur promises that no one will harm Launcelot as he goes "into thy landes" (l. 2440). Launcelot then asks if he can expect peace "in mine owne landes" (l. 2445), to which Gawain swears that Launcelot should get ready because Arthur's forces will soon follow. Launcelot sadly mounts, prepares to ride, and leaves: "At parting was little pride" (l. 2459).

The passage of Launcelot and his knights to the continent and the establishment of their rule in France and Ghent serve to make Launcelot and his forces seem the equals in power and grandeur of Arthur and his forces in England. The plot is thus set for a titanic struggle between two rich and immense powers. At the same time, the poet does not let us forget his other area of suspense, the moral struggle seen through images of the body-soul conflict. As far as the body-soul battle is concerned, the forces are not equal. One figure is a rebel and a traitor, assuming a kingship by presumptuously rising out of his proper

position as subject to become a king. The images of horse-rider, light-dark, ship, land, judge, king-subject, castle, and fighting keep the significance for the moral struggle before us. Arthur's kingdom has reached the state of dissolution and rebellion set in motion when he turned originally to his sensual desire for honor and pride, his sensuality figured as well in Launcelot's affair with Gaynor.

Launcelot and his men ride to Joyous Gard, get ready to leave, and do not stop day or night (l. 2465) until they come to Kerlioun, where they find "rich galleys" (l. 2467). They board, "Now are they shipped on the flood" (l. 2468); and, with the aid of good weather, they land where their will has directed them, at a haven at Benwick (l. 2474). At their arrival they are greeted by many people, including "Grete lordes of the land" (l. 2478), who acknowledge Launcelot as their king, judge, and lawgiver:

> [They] fellen him to foot and hand;
> For their lord they gonne him kithe,
> At his doomes for to stand,
> And at his lawes for to lithe.

Launcelot makes Bors King of Ghent, Lionel King of France, and Ector "King of his fader land" (l. 2494). In addition Launcelot gives lands to each knight and "stored his castles" with supplies (ll. 2489-90), expecting more fighting to come. This brief section, while it is an invigorating promise of more action for the superficial reader, is a compact reminder of man's moral choices. In forty lines of poetry (ll. 2460-99) we see sixteen occurrences of body-soul images pointing to the similarity between what happens to a kingdom in which civil war explodes and what happens to a man who makes the wrong choice between fleshly and spiritual impulses.

Arthur soon follows Launcelot to Benwick and Launcelot's lands to make war upon him, and after an attempt at peace by Launcelot, he besieges Launcelot's castle. This section of the poem (ll. 2500-72) has the images of light-dark, horse-rider, land, fire, ship, battle, castle, earth, king, swine, clothing, stream, and traitor.

Arthur is bothered night and day (l. 2501) by the current situation in his kingdom, and he sends messengers riding throughout England for support in the coming battle against Launcelot:

> On Launcelot's landes for to ride,
> To bren and slee and make all bare. (ll. 2506-07)

The king asks his knights who should be steward of the realm in his absence, because he is concerned "That aliens the land wolde take" (l. 2515). The knights say that if one searched through the realm, a better knight to watch over the realm could not be found than Mordred (ll. 2519-20). The selection is made and the knights ride to Kerlioun to prepare "by the lande side/ Galleys grete. . . ." (ll. 2530-31). They soon are "shipped on the se/ And wenden over the water wide" (ll. 2532-33). They arrive at Benwick and begin to ride through the country making everything desolate--they "brent and slogh on ich a side" (l. 2537). Launcelot awaits battle in his best city (ll. 2538-39).

Launcelot holds a council to decide whether to ride against Arthur's troops or stay within his own walls (ll. 2544-45). Bors thinks they should go out with their bright arms and beat the English forces to the ground (ll. 2552-55). Lionel thinks they should stay within their walls, let the invading forces "prick with all their pride" until they are worn down by hunger and cold, and then ride out and cut them down like sheep. Another of Launcelot's kings says that if

Arthur's troops are allowed to ride at will over our lands, they can bring Launcelot's kingdoms to nought, "While we in holes here us hide" (l. 2571). Galahod and seven brothers of North Wales want to ride out and do battle with Arthur's forces by themselves (ll. 2572-87).

Launcelot decides, however, to stay within the castle, because the land is full of starving people,[34] and battles will kill more people. The knights, "breme as any bore," stay in the castle, and Launcelot sends a messenger to the king with overtures of peace. The maid-messenger is "full sheen," she is set on her steed, and she wears green velvet (ll. 2612-15). Arthur has made camp by a river (l. 2621) in tents with bright pommels (l. 2625), and the maid finds him. Sir Lucan takes her off her steed and talks to her (the poet says that Lucan "wise was under weed," l. 2639), acknowledging that Launcelot is "The best that ever strode on steed." (l. 2641). The maid kneels before the king, asks God to protect him "And all your knightes in riche weed" (l. 2655), and presents Launcelot's request to be allowed to live at peace in his own country (l. 2659) for a year. If the king wants a permanent peace beyond that time, Launcelot will go to the Holy Land (l. 2665) to live the rest of his life.

This unexpected gesture by Launcelot is received pleasurably by the king, who wants to avoid war, but rejected by Gawain, who wants vengeance on the traitor Launcelot because Launcelot has killed Gawain's fellow knights. Gawain will not return to England (l. 2680) until Launcelot is hanged. Since Gawain is adamant about fighting, everyone prepares to fight, and the king sends the message back,

> That we shall wend for no wall,
> Till we with mightes ones have met. (ll. 2698-99)

The maid sadly finds her palfrey and returns to Launcelot in the castle at Benwick.

When the maiden "fair in weed" (l. 2709) is "within the wall," she is taken off her horse; and she delivers the message "Among the princes proud in palle" (l. 2712). The knights get ready to fight; and "by the morrow that day was light," they find themselves besieged.

The description of the siege and of individual battles (ll. 2722-2945), which lasts until Arthur receives word that Mordred has usurped the throne, involves another series of body-soul images. The central images are of a castle with entrances and knights going out, horses and riders, and battle; but other images also appear--light-dark, musical instrument, king, fire, traitor, clothing (here the armor of war), land, and earth.

The conflict begins "Erly as the day gan spring," when the trumpeters see from the walls of the castle the tents of the king's forces, who are ready for the assault (ll. 2722-29). Launcelot sees the troops from the wall as well and is glad that he has seen the sight before his troops have rushed out to fight. Launcelot tells the besieging forces to go home, but Gawain readies himself, mounts, and calls for a combatant:

> Then Gawain, that was good at every need,
> Graithed him in his good armour,
> And stiffly stert upon a steed,
> That seker was in ilk a stour;
> Forth he sprang as spark on glede,
> Before the gates again the towr;
> He bade a knight come kithe main,
> A course of war for his honour. (ll. 2738-45)

In this stanza there is a short review of the moral issues of the poem. The images of clothing, or horse and rider, battle, spark on burning coal, and castle with gates all underscore the moral struggle; and Gawain's call for "A course of war for his honour" specifically recalls Arthur's

folly in calling the tournament in the first scene of the poem.

Boris, King of Ghent, mounts a steed and rides out to meet Gawain, who overthrows both horse and man (l. 2752). Lionel follows, riding his steed out of the castle, and Gawain again overthrows both horse and man (l. 2760). Gawain similarly serves knights which issue from the castle for a half year, until, "Before the gates of the citee;/ Launcelot of tresoun he becried" (ll. 2773-74). Launcelot realizes he must fight to save his honor and apologizes to the king from a tower for having to fight against one of Arthur's kinsmen:

> Above the gates upon the towr,
> Comely to the king he spake:
> "My lord, God save your honour!
> Me is wo now for your sake,
> Against thy kin to stand in stour,
> But needes I moste this batail take." (ll. 2780-85)

Launcelot arms himself ("To warre wanted him no weed"), mounts a horse, and rides forth "as spark on glede." Launcelot and Gawain fight vigorously until Launcelot gives Gawain a severe wound which knocks Gawain down. Gawain is, however, still defiant, waving his sword and calling Launcelot traitor and coward. Launcelot on the other hand tells Gawain that he has forborne Gawain "in every land" (l. 2836) because Gawain was related to the king. Launcelot also tells the king's knights to go home and "leve your warring," because they will "win no worship at this wall." He asks the king, his lord (l. 2848), to think about how many people could die in continued fighting.

Launcelot returns to his castle, and Gawain has his wounds washed and recuperates for a fortnight before coming back to fight again. Gawain's recuperation and adamant desire to fight are parallel to Launcelot's earlier. A second time Gawain stands before the gate (l. 2864) asking for battle:

Come forth, Launcelot, and prove thy main,
Thou traitour that hast tresoun wrought;
My three brethern thou hast slain
And falsely them to grounde brought. (ll. 2866-69)

Launcelot stands above the gates (l. 2876) and calls to the king, saying that he is sad that Gawain is so angry: "Who may me wite, for Cors on Rood/ Tho I him in batail slo? (l. 2880-81).[35] Launcelot does do battle, riding out when he is ready to ride (ll. 2888-89). He reopens Gawain's old wound, Gawain falls to the ground; but, gripping his sword and shield, he refuses to yield. Launcelot declines to fight with an injured warrior: "I will not now, by Cross on Rood,/ Nor never yet did by day nor night" (ll. 2928-29).

Launcelot bids the king and his knights good day, telling them to go home for "the love that hath us be between." They stay for two months before Gawain has mended enough to ride (l. 2940) or even enough to put "foot upon érthe to stand" (l. 2941). But before he can fight again, Arthur receives news of trouble at home, that "they moste home to Yngland" (l. 2945).

Arthur needs to return because of the treachery of Mordred, who is attempting to marry Gaynor and assume the throne. Mordred's action is doubly incestuous--he wishes to marry his uncle's wife, who is also his father's wife. We can also see in the attempt that Arthur's past sin with his sister is coming back to haunt him. But the scene says even more about the nature of sin, particularly Arthur's. Images of traitor, water, ship, marriage and adultery, land, earth, battle, king, light-dark, clothing, castle, prison, horse and rider, cutting, servant-master, musical instrument, and tomb are lively reminders of the moral issues in men's lives and provide a commentary on the shocking, but dramatic, events of the moment.

The king mourns "That such tresoun in Yngland sholde be wrought" (l. 2950) and that he must return "over the flood" (l. 2951). Nevertheless he must break the siege and straighten out matters in England, where "That false traitor, Sir Mordred" has falsely led England (l. 2958) and now is trying to wed Gaynor. Mordred has gotten the council "To hold with Mordred in land with wele"(l. 2969). He has spread rumors that Arthur is "to grounde brought," that they need to choose another king, and that Arthur "loved nought but warring/ And such thing as himselfe sought" (l. 2972ff.). The charge of Arthur's willfulness is true, and once again we see the fruits of Arthur's foolish desire for honor and pride.

A parliament is called and Mordred is made "king with crown" (l. 2951), after which he has a bridal celebration set in motion. Mordred wishes to marry Gaynor in the summer "when it was fair and bright," and "bring [her] as bride to bed" (l. 2989). Gaynor tries to stall, saying that she and her ladies must go to London to "be cledde" for the wedding. Once she is in London, however, she goes to the Tower of London and "sperred the gates and dwelled therein." In taking refuge in the Tower of London, the royal prison, Gaynor reminds us of Launcelot's barring the door to her chamber and shouting, "Thou prisouns me no more. . . ." (l. 1853). Mordred besieges the Tower, "But the walles might he never win" (l. 3001).

The Archbishop of Canterbury warns Mordred that when Arthur comes "over the flood," the action will be dearly bought. Mordred is incensed that the Archbishop tries to "warn me of my will" (l. 3011), and he swears "By Him That for us suffred pain" that the Archbishop shall be drawn by wild horses. The bishop excommunicates Mordred, flees to the wilderness, builds a chapel, and forsakes the world: "Therein wered he the clothes

black,/ In wood as he an ermite were" (ll. 3030-31). Mordred still cannot win the Tower of London by strength or battle, and he fears that he will lose the kingdom when Arthur comes (ll. 3034-41).

Mordred rides to Dover (l. 3042), sets up a blockade of archers from all over England along the seacoast. Arthur is coming "over the flood" with a hundred galleys (ll. 3051-52) and lands at Dover, where he meets many knights "stiff in stour." Arthur soon "hath take the land" (l. 3058), though many die in the battle, one of whom is Gawain, who is hit and is "gone to ground" (l. 3072). Archers go up on the boat (l. 3075), cut into the hauberks of the defenders, and the red blood rushes out. By the time the battle is over, "The stronge streames ran all in blood" (l. 3081). Arthur fights vigorously some of the false, other rebels taking word of the results to "their master, Sir Mordred" (l. 3089). Mordred rides with his forces to Barendown (ll. 3093-94), where the two opposing forces "together ride" (l. 3097).

The individual combat of Arthur and Mordred has several images indicating the flesh-spirit struggle:

> Arthur was of rich array
> And hornes blewe loud on hight,
> And Mordred comes glad and gay,
> As traitour that was false in fight.
> They fought all that longe day
> Til the night was nighed nigh;
> Who had it seen well might say
> That such a stour never he sigh. (ll. 3098-3105)

In these eight lines, there are six images of the body-soul relationship: king, subject-traitor, clothing, musical instrument, light-dark, and battle. With these six images of moral conflict clustered in the stanza, the poet is undoubtedly being puckish when he says that such a stour had never been seen before. (Actually, he leaves open the possibility that there might have been such a battle before.) Arthur fights

energetically, and Mordred sadly calls for his troops to regroup: "Alas, This day so soon is gone!" (l. 3112). Many men lie dead, having been killed "with brighte brandes" (l. 3115), and while Mordred is at Canterbury "upon the morn," Arthur stays "all night" with his dead warriors lying before him (ll. 3120-21).

Early in the morning Arthur orders horns blown (ll. 3122-23), and he conducts a mass burial "In pittes that was deep and wide" (l. 3126), after which he goes into a ship to dinner, only to find Gawain dead by the mast. Arthur is overcome with emotion as he arranges for Gawain's entombment:

> They laid Sir Gawain upon a bere,
> And to a castle they him bore,
> And in a chapel amid the quere
> That bold baron they buried there. (ll. 3136-39)

Gawain's death is the tragic result of Arthur's sin with his sister, and the images of castle, tomb, and music allow us to see Arthur's sin in its larger context of the human condition.

From Gawain's burial to the meeting of Arthur and Mordred on a plain, much of the narrative is taken up with Arthur's dreams and with preliminary negotiation between Arthur's agents and Mordred. But the suspense initiated by the flesh-spirit struggle continues to be seen in the imagery. The scene has, of course, imagery of king and usurping subject, as well as frequent references to battle (ll. 3151, 3161, 3162, 3169, 3217, 3247, 3257, 3279, 3303, 3315). There are also images of water when Arthur first dreams that he is on a wheel above "A black water" with dragons in it (l. 3198). A dominant feature of the scene is the talk about the country of England, and its division, as Mordred asks for Cornwall and Kent. Images of the land thus appear at

lines 3166, 3263, 3267, 3275, and 3295. There is one reference to Mordred becoming "breme as any bore" (l. 3249) and to Arthur leaping upon a steed if the agreement should fail (l. 3278). Earth is mentioned (ll. 3180, 3300); and clothing images occur when Arthur dreams that he is sitting in state on a wheel: "Him thought he sat in gold all cledde/ As he was comely king with crown. . . ." (ll. 3172-73) and when, after his second dream, "Hastely his clothes on him he did" (l. 3224).

The body-soul images in the scene continue to support the flesh-spirit struggle initiated by the figure of Arthur and Gaynor in bed in the first scene of the poem, and Arthur's dream itself shows both the fantasy of the fulfillment of Arthur's dreams for worldly honor and the transience of that honor. In the dream he is at the top of Fortune's wheel, from which he falls down to be seized by dragons:

> At night when Arthur was brought in bed
> (He sholde have batail upon the morrow),
> In stronge swevenes he was bestedde,
> That many a man that day sholde have sorrow.
> Him thought he sat in gold all cledde,
> As he was comely king with crown,
> Upon a wheel that full wide spredde,
> And all his knightes to him boun.
>
> The wheel was ferly rich and round;
> In world was never none half so high;
> Thereon he sat richly crowned,
> With many a besaunt, brooch, and bee;
> He looked down upon the ground;
> A black water there under him he see,
> With dragons fele there lay unbound,
> That no man durst them nighe nigh.
>
> He was wonder ferde to fall
> Among the fendes there that fought.
> The wheel over-turned there with-all
> And everich by a limm him caught. (ll. 3168-87)

In his dream Arthur is at the height of worldly glory and power with his knights near him, but the turning of the wheel of course indicates

that all the worldly fame is short-lived. The body-soul images in the scene simply echo that lesson.

A meeting between Arthur and Mordred is arranged and takes place in an extremely dramatic scene. At the moment when the troops are standing face to face, suspicious of treachery, an adder bites a knight, the knight reaches for a sword to kill it, and the battle is on, ending in the death of Mordred and the mortal wounding of Arthur. The incident of the adder has moral overtones: it is a figure of Satan certainly, but the adder also is a figure of the carnal impulses we have seen all along. The adder disrupts the peace here just as Arthur's desire for honour upset the peace in the kingdom and as Launcelot's carnal desire has led to the destruction of the kingdom. Supporting the central dramatic event are images of king-subject, traitor, land, thorn, light-dark, horse-rider, and earth.

Arthur tells his lords that he does not trust the traitor Mordred and fears "that he will us falsely betray" (ll. 3320-33). Mordred likewise tells his knights that Arthur is unhappy to lose his lands (l. 3331) and that they should fear treason when the troops meet "at yonder thorn" (l. 3334). Arthur goes with fourteen on horses "To that thorn" (l. 3337) wearing bright armor (l. 3338). When he is stung by the adder, the knight pulls out "a sworde bright," and all the knights fear "that tresoun had been wrought" (l. 3349). Arthur "stert upon a steede" (l. 3352) and "wrothly into his saddle he light" (l. 3355). In the battle many knights are "laid upon the bente" (l. 3359). Mordred runs out his steed (l. 3362) and rides through the thick of the battle. The battle lasts from morrow until "the nightes tide," and eventually a hundred

thousand lie "upon the bente" (l. 3374). Arthur wants to bring Mordred "to ground" (l. 3389), and he does; but he receives a mortal wound himself and is taken to a chapel by Lucan and Bedivere.

At the chapel the dying Arthur has his sword Excaliber thrown into the sea, and he is taken away by a ship of ladies. His tomb is later found by Bedivere, who renounces the world to pray at the chapel. The scene also contains Arthur's famous promise to return:

> I will wend a little stound
> Into the vale of Avaloun,
> A while to hele me of my wound. (l. 3515-17)

The episode of Arthur's death has several religious features--the setting is a chapel, prayers are said, Christ and Mary are mentioned, and Arthur issues his first command to cast Excaliber into the sea as he rises to stand by an altar. While the scene does contain elements of a non-Christian tradition, it is clear that the poet is very interested in the same moral issues he has presented all along.[36] The poet's images of the moral struggle here are light-dark, water, king-subject, traitor, earth, ship, tomb, clothing, and thorn.

The knowledge that Arthur is dying informs the scene from the beginning:

> All night they in the chapel lay,
> By the se side, as I you neven,
> To Mary mercy cryand aye,
> With drery herte and sorrowful steven,
> And to her leve Sonne gonne they pray:
> "Jesu, for thy names seven,
> Wisse his soul the righte way,
> That he lese not the bliss of Heven." (ll. 3408-15)

Arthur's soul is about to set out on a journey, and they hope it will go to heaven. Even in this moment, however, we are aware of another time when Arthur was lying down and was foolishly concerned about his <u>honour</u>.

the transience of the worldly glory which Arthur sought is seen in the next stanza, where the bodies of the rich knights are robbed in the field:

> Bolde barons of bone and blood
> They refte them of besaunt, brooch, and bee. (ll. 3418-19)

The king tries to stand by the altar; Lucan dies; and Arthur commands Bedivere to cast Excaliber into the sea, "in the salte flood" (l. 3450). Arthur tells him to hurry "for Cross on Rood" (l. 3452).

Bedivere balks in carrying out the order, showing an earthly cunning: "And I it cast into the se,/ Of molde was never man so mad" (l. 3458-59). He hides the sword and tells Arthur that all he saw when he threw it into the sea was "watres deep and wawes wan" (l. 3465). Arthur sends Bedivere out a second time, and Bedivere throws the scabbard into the sea (l. 3471) and watches from the land while it glides into the water (l. 3474-75). He is unable to report a wondrous sight, and the king knows he has not disposed of the sword:

> "A, false traitour!" he said there,
> "Twice thou has me tresoun wrought." (ll. 3480-81)

Finally Bedivere does throw the sword into the sea:

> There came an hand withouten rest,
> Out of the water, and fair it hent,
> And brandished as it sholde brast,
> And sithe, as gleme, away it glente. (ll. 3490-93)

A puzzle facing me in the earlier sections of the poem was, with all the other body-soul images, why did the poet not connect the sword with the knife of the flesh-spirit discussions. While there are a precious few references to riving, or cutting, the sword generally does not look like a knife. It is always hewing, involved in great strokes

and dintes. The poet's strategy is clear, however, when we notice that when Excaliber disappears, it is brandished precisely as Gawain, lying wounded but defiant, had flourished his sword:

> Thorough the helm into the hede
> Was hardy Gawain wounded so
> That unnethe was him life leved;
> On foot might he no ferther go;
> But wightly his sword about he waved,
> For ever he was both keen and thro. (ll. 2818-25)

And Gawain's ceaseless combativeness was parallel to Launcelot's even earlier. It seems that the poet has saved the sword image, perhaps because of the fame of Excaliber, from being just one more body-soul image and has reserved it as the principal symbol of the worldliness of Arthur. Arthur, lying down at the beginning of the poem, now stands, by an altar, and commands his sword to be thrown into the sea. The gesture symbolizes his rejection of the worldly honor and pride which he had sought earlier. Bedivere, as a man of "molde," wants to preserve it, just as all the other knights have relished honor. We will see presently how Launcelot treats his armor.

After Bedivere tells Arthur of the hand that came from the water and brandished the sword, he helps Arthur to "A riche ship" of ladies, the brightest of whom says that Arthur has been too long from a doctor--which is true in a moral sense as well. Arthur is taken in the ship from the land (l. 3518) and Bedivere searches through the forest all night until "Against the day" (ll. 3423-24) he finds a chapel. At the chapel a hermit lies before a tomb "With an hundreth tapers light" (l.3533). The hermit reports that "About midnight" (l. 3538) some ladies brought the body and buried it. They paid the hermit a hundred pounds to pray for Arthur:

> And bade me pray both day and night
> For him that is buried in these moldes hore
> Unto our Lady both day and night. (ll. 3544-46)

Arthur's courtly career has come to an end: the end of his search for honor is the moldes hore, and the ladies of the court and of the ship fade before "our Lady" to whom the hermit prays day and night.

When Bedivere reads the inscription on the tomb he falls to the ground (l. 3549) from sorrow at the loss of "the beste king/ That ever was in Britain born." He is ready to begin a hermit's life:

> Give me some of thy clothing,
> For him That bore the crown of thorn. . . . (ll. 3554-55)

The episode in which Gaynor and Launcelot take habits and part (ll. 3566-3793) is a beautiful scene, and the beauty lies not so much, but a little perhaps, in the dissolution of a famous love as in the recognition by both that there is a greater love. As Gaynor led Arthur astray when they lay in bed planning to seek honour, now Gaynor rises in our esteem as she takes the lead in turning to God. Even after Launcelot has decided to assume a monk's habit, he asks for a parting kiss; and Gaynor declines:

> "Nay," said the queen, "that will I not;
> Launcelot, think on that no more;
> To abstain us we moste have thought
> Fro such we have delited in ere.
> Let us think on Him That us hath bought,
> And we shall plese God therefore.
> Think on this world, how there is nought,
> But war and strife and batail sore." (ll. 3714-21)

The last two lines indicate that Gaynor is thinking of more than the conflicts caused by their affair--that their abstention from a kiss is a gesture for peace generally. When we consider the wife-lover image as symbolic of sin, it is clear that the poet is continuing to use Launcelot

and Gaynor to suggest man's moral choices. The beauty of the scene thus comes from the final dissolution of an adulterous relationship which has stood throughout the poem as a central image of man's carnality, and the turning of these two people to God.

To emphasize the importance of this section on the development of the flesh-spirit struggle which the poet has been examining in the poem, he has included a crescendo of body-soul images. In this part of the poem appear the images of husband-wife-lover, clothing, light-dark, ship, king-subject, traitor, land, castle, cloister, horse-rider, earth, fire, burden, and tomb. When Gaynor sees the destruction in the kingdom, she and five ladies become nuns at Aumsbury, and "There wered she clothes white and black" (l. 3573). Launcelot in the meantime is coming with his troops in galleys to help Arthur. In his following are "crowned kinges seven" (l. 3582) and lesser nobles and squires, all of whom "lemed light as any leven." Launcelot receives the news "in lande" about Gawain's death, Mordred's attempted usurpation, "how Mordred would be king with crown" (l. 3594). And "in lande" he hears how Gaynor, "the kinges wife" had gone with the five ladies "In land they wiste not whider where" (l. 3603). Launcelot calls his kings, tells them that he is going to see what is happening and that they should not rush to ride after him for fifteen days, no matter what happens to him "In land" (l. 3606-13).

Launcelot is now experiencing a period of moral questioning. He is a "man that coude neither ivel nor good" (l. 3617). It is the experience of the chivalric man who sees the system he operates within so well crashing down about him. The stage is set for a reversal in his

values, and he soon happens upon Gaynor's cloister. He sees it as a "towr" alongside a stream (ll. 3618-19), and in the cloister he sees "a lady bright of lere,/ In nunnes clothing was she cledde" (ll. 3624-25). Gaynor swoons and is led to her chamber where she tells the abbess in Launcelot's presence that their love has caused the war and the death of Arthur, "My lord" (l. 3642), and that she has chosen the cloister for "My soule hele" (l. 3655). She tells Launcelot to go to his own kingdom and take a wife:

> Therefore, Sir Launcelot du Lake,
> For my love now I thee pray,
> My company thou ay forsake,
> And to thy kingdom thou take thy way,
> And keep thy reme from war and wrake,
> And take a wife with her to play,
> And love well then thy worldes make;
> God give you joy togeder, I pray! (ll. 3662-69)

Launcelot protests that he could never be "So untrew" as to forsake Gaynor. Since they have lived "upon this molde" together "by day and night," Launcelot wishes to take the habit as Gaynor has done. When Gaynor asks if Launcelot is sincere, Launcelot replies "yif I said nay,' I were well worthy to be brent" (ll. 3696-97). He repeats, "Brent to ben worthy I were" (l. 3698). He has only to find a hermit who will accept him and clothe him in white and black (ll. 3708-09).

When Launcelot leaves Gaynor, not without sorrow on both parts ("Wringing their handes and loud they yell"), his heart is "hevy as any lede." He questions his purpose in life: "Rightuous God, what is my rede?/ Alas, forbore, why was I born?" (ll. 3740-41). He would have gladly died and he would have torn off his "rich attire" (l. 3745). He weeps all night, going about like a madman, and in the morning he comes to the Archbishop's chapel (ll. 3746-49). When Launcelot and Bedivere

recognize each other, they mourn for the events in the kingdom. The Archbishop brings the stranger a habit (l. 3763), welcomes him, and invites him to stay a night with them. When everyone recognizes Launcelot they embrace him: "Fair in armes they gan him fold" (l. 3771). They give him a warm welcome which echoes the welcome Launcelot received at court from Arthur and the knights.

At the sight of Arthur's tomb, Launcelot suddenly and resolutely renounces his chivalry:

> He threw his armes to the walle,
> That riche were and bright of blee;
> Before the ermite he gan down fall
> And comely kneeled upon his knee.

Launcelot's period of moral questioning comes to an end as he rejects the chivalric life of which he was the representative figure. He pledges to serve God, "That might-full king of mercy free" (l. 3785). The change that has taken place in Launcelot's life in turning his love to God and renouncing his carnal life is symbolized simply when the Archbishop "Kiste him cheek and chin/ And an habit there he did him upon" (ll. 3792-93).

The last section of the poem consists of the renunciation of the world by Launcelot's followers and Launcelot's death. The images of light-dark, water, earth, burden, horse-rider, thorn, tomb, and clothing serve to draw attention to the moral revolutions and religious significance in the episode.

Launcelot has taken the cloth, yet his host still is waiting at Dover. One day Lionel leaves to find Launcelot and is killed. Bors follows, experiencing a period of questioning as Launcelot had earlier, "As he that coude neither ivel nor good" (l. 3809). Early one morning

he rides "by a river side" until he sees the chapel and asks to live with Launcelot. Seven other knights follow and for seven years Launcelot is their priest. In this time they undergo a significant physical change as they grow smaller:

> So little they wex of lin and leres
> Them to know it was strong. (ll. 3832-33)[37]

One evening Launcelot tells the Archbishop that he is going to die: "My foul flesh will to erthe fare" (l. 3841). He tells his fellow monks tonight (l. 3842) that tomorrow when they find him dead (l. 3843) they should bury his body at Joyous Gard (to fulfill an earlier vow which he now regrets). The others protest "For His love That died on Rood" that Launcelot's gloom results only from "hevyness of your blood" (l. 3853) and that he will be better tomorrow.

He goes to bed, laughs aloud during a dream, and is awakened and asked if he is all right. He wishes he could have been allowed to sleep, because he has been dreaming of being in heaven:

> Here was Launcelot bright of blee
> With Angeles thirty thousand and seven
> Him they bore up on high
> Against him opened the gates of heaven. . . . (ll. 3876-79)

The men tell Launcelot to put away such thoughts, that he shall be well by "prime of day," but when they light a candle (l. 3986), they discover that he is dead. He is acclaimed by Bors as the best knight "That ever in stour bestrode steed" (l. 3893) and given to the protection of Christ, "That crowned was with thorn" (l. 3894). The monks sing and read until the fifth morning, when Launcelot is taken to Joyous Gard and buried in "a grave" in the choir (ll. 3902-03).

The monks watch in the castle for three days, "ravished" so that

they do not know when Ector arrives. Ector wants to know whose corpse is in the choir, and when he learns that it is Launcelot's, he becomes irrational:

> Then in armes he gan him take,
> The dede body to clipp and kiss. (ll. 3926-27)

He asks to watch all night, and it is evident that Ector is facing a crisis such as Launcelot and Bors faced earlier:

> Sir Ector of his wit ner went,
> Wallowed and wrang as he were wode.

He holds the corpse again in his arms until they must bury it (ll. 3934-37). They all pray for Launcelot, and Ector at last pays no more heed to his horse and becomes a hermit himself:

> Sir Ector tent not to his steed,
> Wheder he wolde stint or run away,
> But with them all to dwell and lede,
> For Launcelot all his life to pray.
> On him did he ermites weed.
> And to their chapel went their way. . . . (ll. 3946-51)

The sudden mention of Ector's horse and his disregard for it is a clear symbol of Ector's turning to the spiritual life. The monks go to Aumsbury on foot, find Gaynor dead, and carry her to her burial beside Arthur. The monks are now "right of lore" (l. 3966) with chivalry long past. Now "They rede and sing with mild steven" in prayer:

> Jesu, That suffred woundes sore,
> Graunt us all the bliss of heven!
> Amen

To summarize, the stanzaic Morte Arthur was written by a poet who had two kinds of drama and suspense in mind. The first kind, the aunters of Arthur's Round Table, has led the poem for the most part to be placed in the rank of inferior medieval romances of much action and little thought. However, by examining the tradition of images

associated with the popular medieval discussions of the relationship between the body and the soul, and by a careful reading of the poem, we see that the poet has explored a second kind of drama--the suspense of man's moral condition. We are kept constantly aware of the continuing moral drama, from the initial husband-wife image through rebellion and battles to the renunciations of the world and death; and we know that the poet is concerned with man's <u>soulnedes</u> and <u>soul hele</u>. He keeps before us the images of light-dark, fire, earth, burden, water, ship, thorn, swine, horse-rider, castle, tomb, musical instrument, clothing, husband-wife-lover, judge, prison, kingdom, king-subject, lord-servant, rebellion, and war. To this poet, as to other medieval writers and thinkers, man's moral condition, seen through the images of the flesh-spirit conflict, is a subject of intense interest.

This study has been concerned with the habit of medieval writers and preachers of presenting the moral struggle as a conflict between the body and the soul and casting this conflict in one or more of a series of images. Among writers of the earlier Middle Ages, the images are of light-dark, fire, earth, water, burden, ascent, sailor-ship, husk, thorn, swine, horse and rider, and inner and outer man; of dwelling place, vessel, ladder, knife, musical instrument, tomb, clothing, and husband, wife, and lover; and of judge, prison, slavery, kingdom, king, rebellion, and war. Among Middle English authors the images of light-dark, fire, earth, water, burden, ascent, sailor-ship, chaff, thorn, swine, horse-rider, and inner-outer man appear. The dwelling place is usually a castle, and the vessel is still used as the fragile container of the body. The ladder, knife, and harmony still

indicate the relationship of the soul to the body. The tomb has apparently been subsumed in the elaboration of the earth images. Clothing and marriage and adultery still provide vivid analogues of the moral struggle. And while the judge and slavery are uncommon images, the images of prison, kingdom, king- or lord-subject, rebellion, and war are still popular.

Many of the images appear in the _Debate Between the Body and the Soul_, echoing the central conflict in the narrative; and many also appear in the stanzaic _Morte Arthur_. But while their presence in the _Debate_ simply testifies to the author's awareness of the many images and to his ability to use them as further illustrations of the central conflict, the appearance of the images in the _Morte Arthur_ suggests that the body-soul conflict and its attendant images could be present in secular literature as effective and dramatic reminders of the nature of man's moral condition.

---

1. J. J. Jusserand, _English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages_, trans. Lucy Toulmin Smith, 2nd ed. (London, 1950), p. 105. The first edition (London, 1889) has the identical thought in an earlier version of Smith's translation on p. 190.

2. _Ibid._, pp. 105-06.

3. _Middle English Literature_ (London, 1951), p. 67.

4. Richard A. Wertime, "The Theme and Structure of the Stanzaic _Morte Arthur_," _PMLA_, 87 (1972), 1075, mentions five "anomalies" which intrude in the poem. The first is the ballad stanza itself,

> made even less exciting by an impoverished verbal range; (1) a perplexing discrepancy between the narrator's evaluations of the characters and their actions, and what seems to us--indeed quite often to the characters themselves--the obvious moral implications to be drawn; (3) the tyrannical sense of necessity that sometimes dominates the poem; (4) a mixed focus on the main characters, principally Launcelot and Gawayne, who, though occasionally very human, appear for the most part to be rigidly stylized abstractions;

and finally, (5) a lopsided lack of attention to motivation and probability that makes certain events seem bewilderingly arbitrary.

5. "English Rimed and Prose Romances," Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages, ed. Roger S. Loomis (Oxford, 1959), p. 489.

6. The Development of Arthurian Romance (New York, 1963), p. 181.

7. Middle English Literature, p. 69.

8. Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries (New York, 1969), p. 12.

9. Ibid., pp. 186-87.

10. "English Rimed and Prose Romances," pp. 490-91.

11. "Theme and Structure," 1081.

12. "The Middle English Romances: Some Questions of Creation, Presentation, and Preservation," Speculum, 42 (1967), 1-2.

13. Ibid., 23

14. Ibid., 9.

15. "Theme and Structure," 1075.

16. Ibid., 1075-76.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., 1081.

19. A Knyght Ther Was: The Evolution of the Knight in Literature (Lexington, Kentucky, 1967), p. 76.

20. The Decline of Chivalry as Shown in the French Literature of the Late Middle Ages (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1937), p. 418. Cited by Moorman, pp. 76-77.

21. Moorman, A Knyght Ther Was, p. 77.

22. Ll. 704-19. The edition I am using, and to which I will henceforth refer in parentheses, is in King Arthur's Death: The Middle English Stanzaic Morte Arthur and Alliterative Morte Arthure, ed. Larry D. Benson (Indianapolis, 1974). Benson comments on the six earlier editions of the poem (pp. xxxiv-xxxv), only one of which is still in print: Le Morte Arthur: A Romance in Stanzas of Eight Lines, ed. J. D. Bruce, EETS, ES, 88 (London, 1903; reprinted, 1959).

23. Sidney Painter, French Chivalry: Chivalric Ideas and Practices in Mediaeval France (Baltimore, 1940). Launcelot is gifted with prowess and he is "generous, courteous, and avid for glory," as a feudal knight should be (p. 37), although he fails to be loyal to his lord and he loves a lady. Launcelot is also "courteous to everyone," and secretive about his affair with Gaynor as a courtly knight should be, according to Painter (pp. 135-36).

24. "Chrétien de Troyes and Twelfth-Century Tradition,"" Studies in Philology, 62 (1965), 635-46.

25. Rosemond Tuve, Allegorical Imagery: Some Mediaeval Books and Their Posterity (Princeton, 1966), p. 413.

26. Ibid., p. 401.

27. Everyone, including St. Thomas Aquinas (Summa Theologica, 2, 2, 1), recognized that tournaments were beneficial when used as practice for war, though Aquinas and the Church opposed tournaments fought à la outrance, which seems to be the nature of the one called by Arthur. Knights killed in such tournaments were denied Christian burial by the Lateran Council of 1179, and the Church repeatedly excommunicated knights who participated in them. See the entry "Chivalry" in the Cambridge Medieval History, 7, 24, 810-12.

28. It should be noted that the images which I will reveal are very common and are used by medieval writers to represent a wide variety of moral, historical, and cosmological meanings--many more than simply the body-soul conflict. In order to fully understand the author's intentions, we need to know the complex answer to the question, What did each image represent to the author? Civil war, for example, no doubt conveyed to the author very real, historical, nonreligious meanings as well as religious ones. By including the images here under the heading of body-soul images, I am suggesting that the conflict between the body and the soul determined for the author to an important degree the images he uses in the poem. I am not suggesting that other reactions to the imagery are not possible. For two statements arguing that imagery tells us what a poet regards as a significant conflict, see Norman Friedman, "Imagery: From Sensation to Symbol," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 12 (1953), 34, and Kenneth Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form (Baton Rouge, 1967), p. 20.

29. The last two lines are almost certainly intended to be comic. Gaynor refers to her lover and talks about his riding in battle and how she will miss him. She must have other skirmishes in mind.

30. See Benson's note, p. 36.

31. The line omitted by the ellipsis is "Before Sir Mador, the noble knight." Mador has just lavished his forgiveness on Gaynor out

of joy for having fought against Launcelot--before he knows she is innocent. I believe "the noble knight" is phrased with bitter irony, the poet seeing the curiosity of forgiveness on the one hand and savagery on the other.

32. "The Allegorical Siege in the Art of the Middle Ages," American Journal of Archaeology, 23 (1919), 255-69. Loomis makes a sharp distinction between the use of the siege in secular and religious works which is not satisfying. He is forced to maintain that sieges which are not patently allegorical should not be read as allegories:

> In the margins of the Peterborough Psalter of the end of the thirteenth Century and of the Lutterell Psalter of about 1340 one finds spirited renderings of the Château d'Amour that must have diverted the thoughts of many a worldly reader from his devotions, if indeed they were not put there for that very purpose. (259)

It seems more reasonable that the sieges were included precisely because the reader could make the allegorical connections himself between the worldly subject and the Christian sentence. For a challenge to Loomis, see Klenke, 635, who responds to Loomis' statement, in Arthurian Legends in Medieval Art (London, 1938), p. 35, about the Porta della Pescheria of the Modena Cathedral: "How did a subject utterly without religious significance find a place in the decoration of the house of God."

33. For a brief overview of the role of music as an aid to the discipline and vigor of soldiers in the Middle Ages, and of the replacement of songs by trumpets, drums, and pipes in the fifteenth century, see Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5th ed., ed. Eric Blom (New York, 1955), entry War Song.

34. The phrase is "Full thin," which Benson interprets as "starving."

35. The "Cors on Rood" is a specific reference to Christ's suffering in the flesh, and Benson suggests that the frequent oath "by Cross on Rood" or "Cross and Rood" is a metathesized form. (Cf. p. 25, n. to l. 764).

36. Lucy Allen Paton, Studies in the Fairy Mythology of Arthurian Romance, 2nd ed. (New York, 1960), pp. 25-28, discusses the "Sojourn of Arthur in Avalon." The stay in Avalon was in the later tradition, represented in the stanzaic Morte Arthur, merged with a Christian burial. While fairy elements do appear, it is clear, I think, that the poet is interested in the Christian meanings suggested by the scene.

37. One is tempted to see this as an inner-man image. It probably is, however, symptomatic of a general decaying of the fleshliness as the men age.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The author was born in Clifton, Texas, on December 6, 1941. He attended the Clifton Public Schools and graduated from Clifton High School in 1960. He received a B. A. degree from the University of Texas at Austin in 1964 and an M. A. from the University of Chicago in 1965. From 1967 to 1971 he was an Instructor in English at the University of Wisconsin: Marathon County Campus in Wausau, from 1971 to 1974 a Teaching Assistant at the University of Florida at Gainesville, and since 1975 an Instructor in English at William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri. He is married to the former Laura Jane Pfennig and has two sons, Greg and Eric.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Richard H. Green

Richard H. Green, Chairman
Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

R H Bowers

Robert H. Bowers
Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Harold M. Stahmer
Professor of Philosophy and Religion

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English in the College of Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate Council, and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

December, 1975

Dean, Graduate School

University of Florida
1853
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
3 1262 08666 233 4